

POLICE BUDGET EDITION EDITED BY HAROLD FURNESS

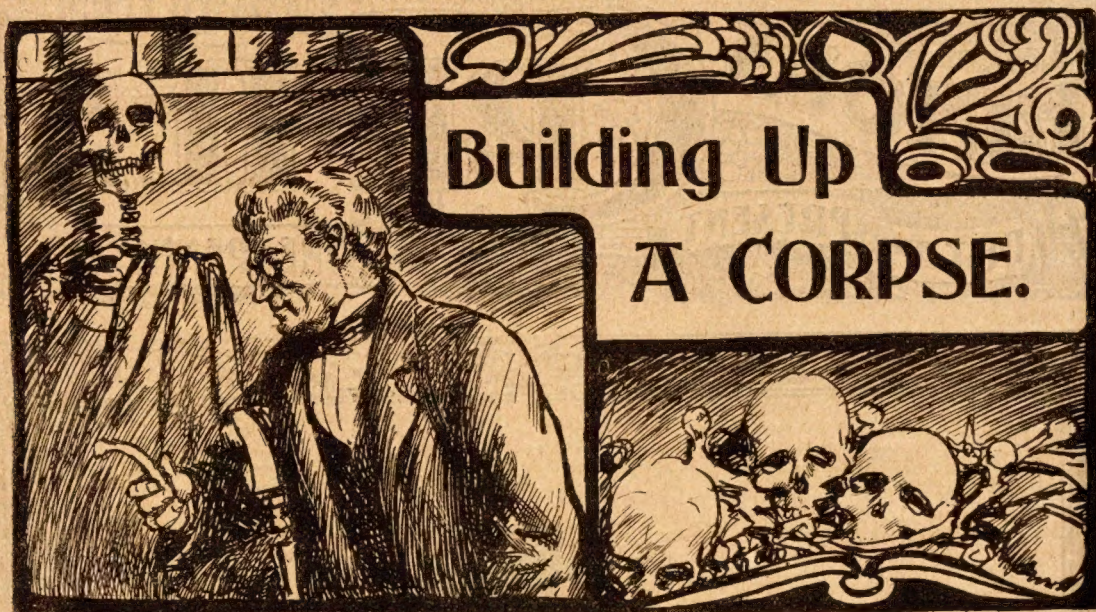
FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT ONE PENNY



"MY GOD, SIR, IT'S PART OF A WOMAN!"

(See "Building Up a Corpse.")



THE BATTERSEA BARBARITY OF 1873.

"And in that point,
I will conclude to hate her; nay, indeed,
To be revenged upon her!"

—SHAKESPEARE, "Cymbeline," Act III., Sc. 5.

DURING my long experience and association with the Press, I remember no greater mystery that has defied all efforts at elucidation than that which was known at the time as the Battersea Mystery. There was an immense amount of excitement created over the affair, and as the police unravelled it bit by bit the interest became intense. At length, however, those who were so actively engaged upon the investigation (which I may mention I followed step by step in order to report the case in certain London daily papers) found a knot, and the disentanglement came to a sudden cessation. In a word, identity of the corpus delicti was never proved, and the evidence of "Old Father Thames," which had on this occasion been remarkably clear (as my readers will presently observe) went for naught, and the mystery is still unsolved. There are, nevertheless, so many curious incidents connected with the horrible affair that I feel sure the simple story will be interesting. It is an instance which proves that dismemberment after murder is by no means a safeguard for the perpetrator of the deed. In fact, it seems to me the method of cutting up a corpse and distributing the pieces only helps in nine times out of ten to the detection of the crime.

Take, for example, the following amongst many others which I could mention: Catherine Hayes, who, with her two assistants, murdered her husband, afterwards dismembering the body and scattering the remains; Kate Webster, who treated her mistress, Mrs. Thomas, in like manner; and Mdme. Henri, a Brittany woman, who also murdered her husband, cut him to pieces, divided them into three parcels, and threw them into a mill-stream, where they were discovered, pieced together, and identified. In each of these three cases the bodies, although cut up and portions of the remains separated miles from each other, were miraculously discovered, reconstructed by the surgeon, and identification thus arrived at.

Mentioning the case which occurred in France, I may point out that the practice of dismemberment in that country seems to be a much more common manner of disposing of the corpse than in this country. Some say that

we are not so much given to the use of the knife, either as a weapon of offence or defence, and that therefore it is not immediately available for the purpose; or, again, that English people will generally shrink from its use, even although their safety may depend upon it. Certainly the fact remains that there are considerably less cases of dismemberment on record in the English criminal annals than in the French.

I have a book upon the subject before me at this moment, which recalls many of the atrocities committed by our friends over the Channel, and points out how, in some instances, the traces of the knife used upon the body of the murderer's victim exhibited great skill and neatness. Notably, one Avinain, who had been an assistant at a hospital, and attended many post-mortems, scientifically dismembered his victim. His cuts were clean and even, he was proud of his work, and, in speaking of it afterwards, said, "I did not chop up, I disarticulated." Liebiez, another French murderer, whose handiwork was intentionally less clean and precise, had been a medical student. Prevost had been a butcher, but he cut up his victim in a very workmanlike manner; and, to mention one more Frenchman, Victalis was a collector of old books and prints, from which he had learnt many useful lessons in anatomy.

The celebrated Dr. Lacassagne in his book upon dismemberment refers to the methods of disposal which have come before his notice, and points out that this is effected chiefly either by burying or casting the fragments away; the first in gardens, cellars, secluded spots, and aiding decomposition by artificial means, frequently proving very disappointing by preserving instead of destroying; in scattering the remains by throwing them down wells, over precipices, into sewers and drains, or out upon the sea. Also the plan of enclosing them in boxes or chests and treating them as railway parcels or merchandise for removal has been repeatedly tried.

In this country, too, similar means are employed; but I doubt whether, if it were possible to get at statistics, we should find a greater receptacle for murdered bodies,

whether in entire corpse form or as mutilated remains, than our River Thames.

And now, having pretty well exhausted the patience of my readers by discussing the disposal of the corpus delicti, and awarding the palm to my old friend, Father Thames, as the wealthiest recipient, it will be as well to get on with my story.

In the year 1873 there resided in South Street, Battersea Fields, a good lady whose name was, very appropriately, Christian. I say "good lady" advisedly, for I had the honour of meeting her upon several occasions during the investigation of the Battersea Mystery, and can speak from personal observation. Mrs. Christian (who, by the bye, was the wife of a commercial traveller, who was rarely at home) was one of those nice, agreeable, middle-aged women who habitually call their own sex "dear," whether long acquainted or upon first introduction, and possessed an exquisitely sweet and confiding disposition. In fact, her "winning ways" made friends for her wherever she went. I must confess that the lady's manner was a little too "winning" to please me, although I found her most approachable when interviewed upon matters of importance in connection with the aforesaid mystery, in which, I may now mention, she played a by no means unimportant part.

Mrs. Christian, indeed, was the beat ideal of a press-man's subject to interview, for she literally filled his notebook with copy, so quickly did she "patter" and so versatile was her treatment of any subject upon which she was approached.

At this particular time Battersea was a long way off from being the semi-aristocratic quarter of the Metropolis that it is to-day. The Albert Bridge was just commenced in 1873; the venerable wooden structure known as Battersea Bridge then crossed the river, an obstruction and object of dread to all who navigated the Thames above bridge. The gardens and park which now occupy the site of Battersea Fields were in existence, certainly, but how different to the delightful pleasure resort of to-day! Indeed, the residence of Mrs. Christian, thirty years ago, was in by no means a "swagger" district. The lady, however, managed to do very well with her lady lodgers, and her apartments apparently were generally occupied by the fair sex.

In the summer of 1872, Mrs. Christian having exhibited in her window the card, "Furnished Apartments to Let," a buxom lady knocked at the door one afternoon, and in a marked provincial accent asked to be shown over the rooms. She gave the name of Cailey, and said she had come up to London from Lyme Regis, in Dorsetshire, upon some very important legal business, which might necessitate a prolonged stay in the Metropolis. The rooms suiting her admirably, she paid a deposit, and at once took possession of them.

Evidently the two ladies from the very first felt a partiality for each other's society, for in a very few weeks they became on the most intimate terms, and before many months had passed they were sworn bosom friends.

Day after day they took afternoon tea together, and over "the cup which cheers but not inebriates" Mrs. Cailey divulged the history of her past career to her kind and sympathetic landlady, and the friendship which had so spontaneously sprung up between them was cemented by the exchange of many family secrets.

It will be unnecessary for me to pry into these good ladies' confidences too far, but, to aid the development of my story, I may mention that the dame from Dorsetshire informed Mrs. Christian that she was the widow of a wealthy landowner of Lyme Regis, whose property had been bequeathed to her. The will, however, had been contested by her husband's next-of-kin, and, to save the estate being thrown into Chancery, she was seeking legal advice in London, and was confident that affairs would be settled in a manner most satisfactory to her. Mrs. Cailey even went so far as to produce pawn-tickets of jewellery and other articles which she stated she had pledged to pay lawyers' fees and help her until she should draw from the estate. She also informed her landlady that she had stored away a consider-

able quantity of valuable furniture, which she intended to release, when she would take a house in London, and that her dear, kind friend should share with her the joys of her prosperity.

And so matters went on month after month, the Dorsetshire lady making frequent visits to her solicitors, and reporting every time most satisfactory progress. It would seem, however, that there were a few tiffs between the two friends—when is there not between two of the fair sex who are in perpetual communion?—brought about by the late hours which Mrs. Cailey kept. Nevertheless, they got on very well together, take it on the whole, and as the legal business matured Mrs. Christian looked over many faults—quite from an unselfish motive, of course—and they became firmer friends than ever.

It was at the commencement of September, 1873, that Mrs. Cailey announced the joyful intelligence that she was about to receive the first instalment of the money due to her out of the estate. It was only the inconsiderable amount of £800, but the ladies, over their cups of tea, built castles in the air and planned out the way in which the money should be invested.

As far as I remember, it was upon the 1st or 2nd of September that the money was to be paid, and Mrs. Cailey set forth dressed in her best, her face wreathed in the smiles of pleasurable anticipation, to draw the cash.

It was a nasty, wet evening as Mrs. Christian awaited her friend's return at the window of No. 15, South Street, Battersea Fields, counting the rain-drops that trickled down the windows, and anxiously—not to say impatiently—looking in vain for her lodger. Ten o'clock, eleven, midnight passed, and still no signs of her friend. Should she go to the police? No; something unforeseen had happened. She would certainly arrive in the morning. One of the other lodgers, who was in all probability piqued at not being received into the confidence of Mrs. Cailey, spitefully suggested that the lady had received the money and decamped; that the confiding landlady, in whose debt she was to no inconsiderable amount, would never see her again. This accusation Mrs. Christian scornfully resented, and she was right. About one o'clock a knock came to the door, and, behold! there was the dear, lost one. But in what a plight! Dazed and almost speechless, she entered the house and threw herself upon the couch. It was then observed that she was smothered in mud, that her hair was dishevelled, and that she had an ugly bruise upon the side of her head. After having regained her composure a little, Mrs. Cailey, somewhat incoherently, recounted her adventures of the day. It appeared, according to her account, that she had visited her solicitor, and had been kept waiting for the best part of the day for a settlement of her affairs; but at the last moment had been told that certain documents were not to hand, necessitating a postponement for another few days. Disappointed and in no agreeable state of mind, she had accompanied some friends to a place of amusement, had supper, and, bidding them good night, engaged a cab to bring her home. Arriving at Battersea Park, the cabman had refused to drive her further, so she got out to walk home in the dark. Near the water-side she was stopped, knocked down by a blow upon the head, and the little money which she had taken from her.

Mrs. Christian suggested at once communicating with the police; but the sufferer would not hear of this course, declaring that if her name appeared in the papers it would jeopardise her financial affairs. So, for the nonce, the matter blew over.

A day or two later Mrs. Cailey set forth again upon her errand to the solicitors, and her considerate landlady begged that she might accompany her upon this occasion and see that no harm came to her. But madame refused her attentions, informing her that she had two gentlemen to meet—one of them a doctor, with whom she had recently formed an acquaintance, and who had visited her at South Street—and that she would have all the protection she needed.

So once more she set forth—this time confident of getting her money. There was an affectionate parting between the two ladies, and the Dorsetshire woman's last remarks were: "Well, good morning, my dear; you have been very kind to me during my trouble, and I'll never leave thee. I shall fetch all my things out of pledge, and you ought now to consent to take a house and let us live well, for I shall love thee as long as I live."

They kissed at the door, and then, once more turning back, Mrs. Cailey said: "You will not know me when I come back, for I shall then be dressed as I used to be. Good-bye, dear!"

This was on September 4, and again Mrs. Christian sat up for her lodger, but she never came. Again the Job's comforter spitefully told the landlady that Cailey would not return.

"At last, you see, I am right. I told you so from

gerous old Lambeth Bridge, they make their way leisurely through the dead water, for the tide is almost at full ebb. Through Vauxhall and past Nine Elms, they hug the Surrey side, and are close in shore when they get opposite to the Pimlico Pier.

The dark, slimy mud stretches right and left of the Southwark Waterworks, for it is now quite low water. The man with the tiller, who has charge of the galley, with a quick eye made sharper by his constant look-out upon the river, notices a strange object upon the shore, for the mist is now rolling away and the sun has struggled through and sparkles upon the ripples made by the oars.

"Easy all," cries Richard Fane, who is coxswain of the galley. "What's that, mate, up there, ten or twelve yards from the shore?"

"Looks like a fore-quarter of sheep, gov'nor," says bow, taking a good look at the curious object.



ENGAGED A CA3 TO DRIVE HER HOME.

the very first. She has received the money, and you will never see her face again." And these prophetic words seemed destined to be true, for the woman never returned, and Mrs. Christian appeared to be heartbroken.

Now, it will be necessary for me to change the scene, and ask my readers to look through my kaleidoscope, which I will turn quickly upon the series of horrible pictures that it will be necessary to look upon, to follow the story of this Mystery of the Thames.

Friday, September 5, 1873, was one of those typical days of the autumn month. A mist hangs over the bosom of Old Father Thames, and soon after five o'clock in the morning, as a police galley puts off from their headquarters, the brig moored off Somerset House, and the men steadily pull up river; it is scarcely possible to see two boat's lengths ahead. But the Thames police know the river so well that they can almost pull from London Bridge to the locks blindfolded. Shooting Waterloo, the railway bridge, Westminster, and the miserable and dan-

"Pull in, and have a look," orders Fane, and the nose of the boat is run ashore, and the man forward jumps out.

Accustomed as they all are to strange sights, this is a startler. "My God, sir, it's part of a woman!" shouts bow. "Quick; come here, sir!" Fane jumps out of the boat and joins his mate. There, sure enough, lying with the round, plump, white breast uppermost, and the sun now shining upon it, is the left quarter of a female's body. That part which has been lying upon the bank, and where the knife has severed it, is besmeared with mud, but there is evidence by the red, beef-like appearance of the flesh not covered by skin that it has but recently been severed.

Tenderly the men pick up the ghastly fragment, and place it carefully in the boat, and with the greatest expedition take it aboard the "Royalist" police boat. There is no doubt about it—either a hoax is being played by some medical students, or a foul murder has been committed; so, without a moment's waste of time, the huge piece of flesh, for it is part of a stout female, is taken to the police-

station at Battersea, and submitted to Dr. Kempster, the divisional surgeon.

A turn of the kaleidoscope brings us to the river off Brunswick Dock, Nine Elms. It is about ten o'clock, on the same day that the first discovery has been made. Henry Parker, a policeman attached to the railway, is standing on the shore. Looking into the murky water he sees something white bobbing up and down. At first he takes it for a chalky substance, but as it gradually floats past him, close to the shore, his suspicions as to the object are aroused, and he follows it up-stream, until it drifts within his reach. To his horror, he recognises it to be the upper portion of the body of a female. Dragging it out of the water, he procures a bag, and takes it at once to the railway-station, and a constable is called. There is no doubt as to what it is, and the gruesome parcel is immediately taken to Inspector Starkey, who conveys it to the Battersea Police-station, where Dr. Kempster is at that very moment making a careful examination of the first consignment of the woman's remains.

It is found to be the corresponding quarter, and fits exactly into its position. By this time there is no doubt in the minds of the doctor and the police that a murder has been committed, so notice is quickly given to all police, and others working on the river, to keep a sharp look-out.

On the same evening the following letter appears in the papers:

"September 5, 1873.

"I have examined, at the Battersea Police-station, the left quarter of the thorax of a female of fair skin and somewhat fat. Death has taken place within a few hours. The hand, arm, and other side of the thorax and the rest of the body have been separated with a knife, and cut and sawn in an unscientific manner; the body has not been dissected for anatomical purposes, but has been cut up immediately after death. The vessels are all quite empty.

"(Signed) W. H. KEMPSTER, Surgeon V Division."

The next view we get of the remains of the poor victim of this unquestionable atrocity is far down the river. On the bank at Duke's Shore, Limehouse, are gathered a number of people intently looking at some strange object that has floated down upon the tide. John Parker, who is in charge of a police galley, is hailed, and comes ashore. He finds that the reason for the public curiosity is something ghastly to the sight. It is the whole of a human face, with the ears attached, but the skull missing. This is also taken to Dr. Kempster, and on Saturday he reports as follows:

"Battersea Police-station, Sept. 6, 1873.

"I have examined the scalp and portion of the skin of the face of a woman, aged presumably about forty. The integument has been separated from the bone by a sharp instrument, and was cut irregularly in several places. The head was covered with short, dark hair, very thin; the eyebrows are dark, and there is a very thin, dark moustache. The ears are somewhat coarse, and pierced for ear-rings, which, however, have not been torn out. The end of the nose has been severed from the root, and is attached to a portion of the upper lip. It is short, thick, and round at the extremity. There is a large scar on the right temple, which was caused by a blow by a blunt instrument or substance before death. The scalp is divided at the upper margin of the brows, but I cannot determine whether before or after death.

"(Signed) W. H. KEMPSTER, Surgeon V Division."

And now let me present my readers with the few remaining views of these gruesome parts of a fellow-creature thus brutally done to death in the midst of our busy capital, for the subject is too horrible, I am sure, to dwell upon in all its dreadful details.

Richard Stratford, a dredger, picked up what he thought was a bit of a thigh, but which was discovered by the surgeon to be one of the missing shoulders. This was

found as far down the river as Blackwall on the Kent side. Thomas Evans, a waterman, had heard about the tragedy, and, seeing something strange floating, turned it over several times, when he found it to be a thigh. A man named Bennett, a platelayer working in the Royal Arsenal, saw something lying on the bank at Woolwich, and on examination it was seen to be human flesh and bone. It was the woman's pelvis. John Prince, a waterman, was working under the woodwork set up for the construction of the Albert Bridge, when he saw an arm floating with the tide. The hand had been removed at the wrist, and it was cut off at the elbow. Upon it were two distinct bruises. Paterson, a carman, also found an arm exactly correspond-



"I am sure that it is her."

ing with the above; and William Prince—curiously enough a brother to the man I have mentioned—had rowed down from Putney, and when opposite the Wandsworth Distillery saw something floating in the middle of the stream, which proved to be one of the woman's thighs. Joseph Gerrard, a waterman, whilst on a barge at Hammersmith, picked out of the water a right foot, with a bruise upon the instep. On the 10th, or five days after the discovery of the first part of the female remains, Walker, of the Thames Police, found a leg, from knee to ankle, off Easton's Wharf, Commercial Road, Lambeth, and during the sitting of the coroner at the adjourned inquest, another part of the body and portion of an arm was brought in.

One of the unfortunate woman's lungs was found off

Brunswick Wharf by Inspector Marley, and the other lung was discovered by some men near the Battersea railway pier, who thought it to be sheep's lights. Other fragments were picked up, and before a week had expired the corpse was made comparatively perfect, the body being "built up" in a marvellous manner by Mr. Hayden, medical officer to the Battersea and Wandsworth Workhouse.

I was present when a photograph was taken, and it was difficult to imagine how it had been possible to unite all these fragments and limbs, many of them having been separated by miles from one another for several days; for it was not until September 15 that the last piece was found near Hungerford Bridge, being a piece of the right arm. The surgical skill employed to unite these fragments was wonderful, and placed the body once more in such a normal condition that it could easily be identified.

It may well be imagined that the talk in the town was scarcely of anything else, for it had been established beyond doubt that the poor creature had been cruelly murdered, and immediately after death—some declared that it might have been before the victim's life had departed—had been cut up with sharp instruments and saws.

Then came the trouble with the terrible question—by whom was this atrocious murder committed? Nobody could form the slightest conjecture. Not the faintest clue was to hand. The police were at a loss from the very first. They were, indeed, powerless to move until the body had been identified by someone.

And all this time Mrs. Christian, of 15, South Street, Battersea Fields, was bewailing the loss of her friend, and wondering whether she would ever meet her again. True, she had heard that some pieces of a woman had been found in the Thames; but she rarely had a newspaper in the house, besides, how should it occur to her that it should have any connection with her lost friend? Gossip had said that it was a bargee woman who was suspected of being slain, and so Mrs. Christian took little heed of events until she happened to mention, one evening, to a neighbour, that her late lodger had been attacked some time before on the banks of the river. Without saying a word, the neighbour who heard of this communicated with the police and in hot haste the detectives went down to Battersea, and called on Mrs. Christian.

"Yes, of course," she replied to their inquiries. "What a fool I must have been! Why, it was on the very day before the first part of the mutilated body was discovered that Mrs. Cailey left me. My God! It must be my dear friend. Fool that I was not to think of this before. Yes, yes—a woman of about forty years of age. Exactly—that corresponds; and her height—rather more than you describe. Very thin—the hair on top of the head. Yes, to be sure, and rather plump. Why, great heavens! it must be she, my poor darling—my lost friend!"

Here was a revelation! At last the detectives had made a start, and would soon run the murderer to earth. They took notes of the strange gentleman—a doctor, too—who visited her, and all the particulars they could get as to the missing woman's habits. But the most important matter was to get Mrs. Christian to view the body and face—the latter, by the bye, being kept separate, and placed in spirits of wine to preserve it. So she was hurried off in a fearful state of excitement to the Clapham Workhouse to view the remains.

The ghastly scalp and skin were stretched over a jug and placed upon a table, and poor, nervous Mrs. Christian was brought into the room. It was evident that she recognised the face at once; but the shock was too much for her. She reeled, and sank back in a fainting condition. After the first shock, she recovered somewhat, and was able to say in a faint, low voice: "Yes; there are the poor dear's head and the hair I have so often dressed; the cheeks I have so often kissed. There is the scar I have so often seen upon the breast, so full of trouble. I have not the slightest doubt—I am sure it is her!"

Scotland Yard was busy that day. Unfortunately, Mrs.

Christian knew very little about Mrs. Cailey's people; but the police were on her track, and the good lady of South Street, Battersea, was one of the principal witnesses at the adjourned inquest. Somehow or other, she did not then seem so positive as to the body and face being that of her friend. There was a disparity in height, size, and many minor details, and the coroner and police—who, I had reason to believe, had found out something about Mrs. Cailey after the body had been identified—discredited many of her statements. That they were perfectly correct was soon proved, for, on September 17, Mrs. Cailey, the Dorsetshire heiress, was seen walking in the King's Road, Chelsea, looking the picture of health. But whether she eventually, after her sudden resurrection, found her way to South Street, Battersea Fields, and "squared accounts" with her dear friend, Mrs. Christian, I never could ascertain.

The tragedy for a time horrified the public and perplexed the police; but as weeks and months rolled on it was nearly forgotten, and although there is still an opportunity of identifying the victim by the photograph taken when the corpse was built up, not the slightest suspicion fell upon anybody, and the unknown never found a claimant; so we may truly class this terrible murder amongst our series of the Mysteries of the Thames.



Smith, Locksmith.

THE following dialogue occurred in a London police-court last month:

Magistrate (to prisoner): "What's your name?"

Prisoner: "Smith."

Magistrate: "Occupation?"

Prisoner: "Locksmith; and when this 'ere row a-started I made a bolt for the door."

In spite of this airy badinage, the "beak" remarked: "Well, all I can say is—lock Smith (locksmith) up!"

A Costly Experiment.

IN the year 1795 there was living at a celebrated coaching-house, the Castle and Bell, Marlborough, a young stableman, named Tom Franklin, and a chambermaid known in the neighbourhood as "Pretty Polly." The two, who were respectively eighteen and seventeen years old, fell in love with each other, and were engaged to be married. Polly had also another lover, a humpbacked driver of the mail, who used to boast that no two men could rob him of his charge.

One day two ladies came to the inn in their carriage, and their coachman falling ill, Tom was sent to drive them to Chippenham. On the downs beyond Beckenham they were attacked by a footpad, who presented a pistol at the lad's head, and ordered him to stop; but while the robber was busy with the ladies, Tom seized his pistol. The footpad then drew another weapon, fired, and decamped. The ladies were so pleased at the lad's bravery that they presented him with ten guineas, and the people at the inn, after making him drink much more wine than was good for him, lent him a horse to return part of the way. On his arrival at Beckenham he had more to drink, and, being naturally a very sober lad, was soon overcome. However, he started on his way home on foot, and, meeting the humpback whose boasted courage had been the topic of conversation at his last halting-place, he, in order to try him, presented the footpad's pistol. To throw out the mail-bag and drive off was the instant work of the post-boy, and Tom fell insensible by the side of the letters.

The humpback returned to the post office at Marlborough, and said that he had been attacked by four armed men. Tom was found sleeping by the bag, and conducted before the magistrate. One of his companions having told Polly, with tears in his eyes, she swooned away, but, recovering, ran six miles to where he was confined, only arriving in time to see the magistrate make out the mittimus, committing him to Salisbury Gaol. The wretched pair walked hand-in-hand to the prison, overwhelmed with their misfortune; and at his trial the hunchback, having sedulously scattered lies abroad about his rival, and made the worst of his evidence, and robberies being very common on that road at the time, he was condemned to death. The faithful girl stayed with him to the last, attending him to the gallows, and exhorting him to die with courage, in the hope of meeting her in another world. But this last strain was too much for her poor brain; at night she took a spade, and, proceeding to the gibbet where her lover was hung in chains, she dug with much difficulty a trench, in which she lay down to die, covering herself with flowers and leaves. In the morning she was found by some labourers with her wits quite gone, and she remained in Bedlam for some years, an incurable and melancholy victim to a judge's stupidity and the barbarity of the English laws.

Gabrielle's Guilt and Eyraud's Expiation.

A sordid tale of lust and blood,
and an example of advertising
Justice.

"What mighty ills have not been done by woman?
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!"
—OTWAY, "The Orphan," Act III., Sc. I.

PART I.



THE opportunities for debauchery in Paris far excel those which are to be found in any other city in the world. Unbridled licence exists in many portions of the French capital, while every facility is offered to the roué to complete the work of self-abasement which he has taken in hand. Dissipation assumes an aspect almost unknown in other countries, while the orgies which take place in the houses of ill-repute would bring the blush of actual shame to the cheeks of the most abandoned Britisher. Bad, the Englishman may be at

times, but he never descends to the disgusting lewdness of his Gaelic neighbour, nor does he ever commit acts at which the very brute creation would revolt. Yet such wickedness is of nightly occurrence in Paris; yes, and even in many of the larger French towns. Some idea of the character of a man who obtains the reputation of a rake among the frequenters of such earthly hells may therefore be more easily imagined than described. Such a man was Michel Eyraud, who flourished like a noxious plant in the night haunts of Paris in the year 1889.

In the day time he was a partner in a respectable firm of merchants; just an ordinary, everyday business man, with ideas which seemed never to rise above the prices of commodities and the rise and fall of markets, with perhaps a little innocent amusement on the Sundays to brighten up the week; in fact, he appeared to be a replica of the fifty thousand commonplace bourgeois who find their daily bread in the offices in the heart of the great French metropolis. That was the artificial man; the real being did not manifest itself till night had fallen.

How shall we describe Michel Eyraud? It is difficult. Imagine the worst possible man you can conceive, one given entirely over to everything that is bad, with no redeeming feature, one whose very appearances of virtue are repulsive because of the awful hypocrisy which they cloak. Regard such an one as good compared with Michel Eyraud, and some slight idea of his depravity may be arrived at. His least appalling vices are nameless; his ordinary sins indescribable; his greater transgressions unknown to the Englishman. Among the men with whom he associated at nightfall he was regarded as a thoroughly bad man, and was hailed as a master in bestiality by the worst characters in the foulest dens of infamy.

During one of the periods when he assumed an air of sanctity, Eyraud married a gentle, innocent woman, whose convent up-bringing accounted for her absolute ignorance of sin, and for the ease with which she was duped. She had a little money which her lord and master could not touch, and it was well that she was thus provided for, for the

earnings of her husband, never very large, were speedily squandered on the mistresses whom he almost weekly added to his string of admirers. As the fruit of this marriage, Eyraud had one little daughter, Reine, who was the only living creature he really cared for, and whose life he blighted by his career of infamy.

We have said that Madame Eyraud was innocent and ignorant, but it will hardly be credited that she was so blind to the sins of her spouse that he was emboldened to establish his mistresses in the house next door to his own home, and madame was not aware that anything was amiss!

In the early part of the year 1889 the firm of Fribourg et Cie., in which Eyraud was a partner, failed, and Michel found himself very hard pressed for money. For the maintenance of his home he wanted nothing, for he took care that the small income of his wife was entirely devoted to keeping that up; but he wanted money for his pleasures, and, being an accomplished swindler, he soon managed to extract from the purses of his "friends" sufficient to pay for his daily needs. By so doing, however, he was doing himself harm, for one by one they began to look askance at him, and to have their doubts as to his preserving that honour which is said to exist among thieves. One there was, however, who stuck to him, a M. Rémi Launay, a solicitor, who was not afraid of being cheated by his artful friend.

Being short of money, naturally a man of Eyraud's temperament wanted more amusement, so he promptly discarded his former mistresses and installed one Gabrielle Bompard in their place, allowing her to occupy the house next to his own.

Scarcely had he done so than as a result of investigations into the affairs of Fribourg et Cie., a prosecution was instituted against Michel Eyraud, and he realised that unless he was able to obtain a considerable amount of money he would probably be severely punished. At that time no actual criminal proceedings had been taken; but Eyraud was astute enough to recognise that the moment the business transactions of his late firm were submitted to the scrutiny of the lawyers in court, he was sure to be arrested, and his guilty conscience told him that many other little frauds which he had practised successfully might come to light and the case go hard with him. In his straits he consulted Rémi Launay, and the clever lawyer advised him to make himself scarce before the day for the hearing of the action came round. Eyraud saw the wisdom of the device, but a great difficulty stood in the way; he had not the funds to get farther than England, and only the means to stop there for a few days. It is eminently characteristic of the man that under these circumstances he decided to take his paramour, Gabrielle Bompard, over to London on a pleasure trip, and the pair set out at once for "perfid Albion."

Of course Michel confided to Gabrielle the position which he was in and the dangers which he would have to face if he were to appear in a court of law. Incidentally it may be mentioned that he did not tell his wife how he was placed, nor did he acquaint her with the fact that he was not going to London unaccompanied.

Gabrielle Bompard was a native of Lille, and was the daughter of respectable parents whose one great grief in life was the disgraceful career of their child. She was sent to a good school, but she early developed vicious habits, and after repeated warnings and frequent punishments, she was expelled on account of her innate wickedness. In fact, she was so thoroughly bad that her presence in any school was sufficient to corrupt it. Her language was more that of a gutter urchin than of the child of gentle parents, while she was unutterably lewd both in her habits and her thoughts. As no school would admit her, Gabrielle's parents kept her at home, but she was a great source of trouble to them, and was herself profoundly unhappy. Whenever she was not being watched she was sure to be engaged in some intrigue with the nearest lad, be he butcher's boy, postman, or young squire's son. She was by nature a courtesan, and desired the admiration of men and the delights of illicit love. She was extraordinarily precocious, and from the time she was fifteen was quite beyond the control of her parents. They hoped, and hoped in vain, that someone would marry her and take her off their hands.

When nearly twenty, she saw an advertisement in one of the local papers to the effect that a lady was wanted in the office of Messrs. Fribourg et Cie. and she decided to apply for it, for, though she hated work of any kind, she was anxious to get to Paris, where her passions could have full

play without the constant supervision of her parents, and where she would not have to meet their sorrowful glances every day. Hoping that regular employment might be good for their daughter, M. and Madame Bompard agreed to allow Gabrielle to go to the capital with a view to taking up a situation. She did so, and speedily found that in Paris there were plenty of people only too willing to pay court to her, provided she gave them the caresses of feigned love in return.

A very short acquaintance with the ways of the gay city showed Gabrielle that she would do well to turn her hobby into a profession, and she entered the ranks of professional women of the pavements. It must not be imagined that she started as a common harlot; on the contrary, she knew that she was comely, and that money, fine dresses, and a fitting ménage were the least tribute due to her charms, while she recognised that an air of seeming respectability enhanced her value in the eyes of those who purchased her kisses. To an English eye she was not beautiful, not even pretty, but she was passably good-looking, with regular features, and an air of naive modesty which would deceive all but the initiated, and which was strangely out of keeping with the corrupt mind hidden behind the demure face. She was moderately tall, with a wealth of dark hair, which she dressed very stylishly. Young as she was, she was a past mistress in the art of coquetry, and could speedily bring the volatile Frenchmen to her feet. As a companion, then, Eyraud had a presentable woman who might pass anywhere as his wife, or, for that matter, his daughter.

Gabrielle was alarmed at the bad news which her lover had imparted to her. Were he to lose his liberty, or his opportunity for swindling, she would be thrown out of employment, while her name would assuredly be brought before the public, and her value decrease greatly. Moreover, she loved Eyraud in a passionate sort of way, not with a true love, but with a species of animal passion, and her distaste at losing him was much that of a wolf at parting with its mate. Accordingly, she set her brains to work to see if some scheme could not be devised by which the evil could be averted. The more she thought, the farther off seemed help, till the idea struck her that it was a pity that some of the wealthy rakes who abounded in Paris could not be forced to disgorge a portion of their superfluous cash for the relief of her lover. The more she thought of it, the more firmly she was convinced that justice demanded that some one of the rich should be despoiled for Eyraud's sake. But how was this desirable end to be brought about? Then, through the mists of her mind loomed the word "murder." At first she recoiled with horror at the bare suggestion, but after a short while she grew reconciled to it, and the nearer the dreaded day of separation came, the less repugnance she felt. Then she broached the subject to Eyraud.

"Tell me, darling. There are many rich men who want me to be their little wife, as I am yours. I hate them, but they are so rich. Could not we take their money from them and be happy?"

Michel was taken aback at first. He knew that Gabrielle was fond of him, for he was conceited enough to think that every woman was in love with him. Still, this proof of her devotion was gratifying. He smiled at her, and asked, "Well, little one, that is a good idea. There are lots of rich people about, but how are we to get their money? Who do you suggest?"

"There's old Dupont, the jeweller. He wants me to become his mistress, you know."

"If you do, I shall be your lover all the same. I don't want to lose you, Gabrielle. What do you propose?"

"I shall never leave you, cheri; I hate Dupont; he puffs and blows like a pig. Besides, he's greasy. No, we must kill the old brute, and then we can take his money."

Eyraud certainly was not prepared for this solution of his difficulties, and told Gabrielle that he would have nothing to do with it, but she only smiled at him as she munched chocolate, and her smile fascinated him. He was really growing fond of his latest mistress; it was quite a new sensation. He endured his wife, but he had never really been fond of a soul.

"And how will you get hold of Dupont?" he asked.

"Oh, that's easy enough. But it is not necessarily the fat jeweller; there are others, as you know. It's not hard to kill, and easier to find a victim."

"What do you mean? I know nothing about it. At least, that is, I know nothing about such things. Why do you say I do?" replied Eyraud angrily.

"I did not mean that you knew anything about killing, but one never knows," laughed the siren.

"Be silent!" yelled Eyraud, in a passion. Gabrielle was frightened, and hurriedly assured him that she meant

nothing; at the same time her woman's wit told her that there was something connected with killing which was distasteful to her companion, and she thought "if once, why not twice?" For a short time she let the matter drop, and then again approached the subject, pointing out to Eyraud that there really could be no danger in killing one of the "men about town," for they would hardly be missed.

"But where are you to find a 'man about town' with plenty of money?" queried Eyraud, whose experience was that while he had money there were any number of people willing to enjoy themselves at his expense, but that now that he was short of the needful cash he could not find any who had more coin than they actually required. "It will take



She broached the subject to Eyraud.

a lot of money to put me straight, Gabrielle. At least twenty thousand francs, and the 'boys' don't carry that about with them, even if they have it at the bank."

"Leave that to me," responded the courtesan. "I know who have money and who have not. There are lots of rich old night-birds whom you have never seen, who have plenty of spare cash."

"Perhaps if I had known them they might not have so much. Well, who shall we take?"

"There! I knew you'd be reasonable. Let me see. Dupont is too prominent, and would be missed at once. What do you say to Rémi Launay?"

"Impossible! He is a friend of mine. Besides, he has not much money. I know that."

"Well, suppose we say old Gouffé?"

"What!—the old writ-server? He has not a sou except his pay and commission. He'd never do."

"Won't he, then? He has plenty of cash, but the old rascal is too wily to let you or your friends know anything about it. You leave him to me. He'll prove worth the risk."

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER LIV.—(Continued.)



THE earl rose, and, bidding the farmer good morning, entered his carriage and was driven off. Mr. Jamblin was a little dazed, and it took him some minutes to gather his thoughts together.

When this had been done he sought John and Maude Ashbrook, who were in the garden at the rear of his house. He made them acquainted with all that had transpired in the best parlour.

His young friends were equally as astonished as himself, but they both coincided in the opinion that Miss Jamblin ought at once, without hesitation or delay, to pay a visit to the earl's palatial residence.

Maude went upstairs to communicate the intelligence to her friend Patty.

"He be a real gentleman, every inch on him!" said the farmer to young Ashbrook; "that I always knew, but I didn't think he was so tender-hearted."

Miss Jamblin was prevailed upon to give a reluctant consent to pay a visit to Broxbridge Hall, and on the day following the earl's interview with Jamblin, the carriage was again at the door of Stoke Ferry House. In it was Aveline herself who had come to fetch Patty Jamblin, who was taken by storm and whirled on to Broxbridge before she had time for reflection.

It is needless to say that the farmer's daughter was treated with the greatest kindness and consideration by Aveline Gatliffe.

Meanwhile, the earl had telegraphed to Scotland Yard for Mr. Wrench, who hastened down to Broxbridge by the first train.

After picking up all the information he could, Mr. Wrench waited upon the earl.

"Well, my lord, I am here again at your service," said the detective.

"If you will kindly explain to me the nature of the business, it shall receive every attention."

"It is this, Mr. Wrench—a brutal murder has been committed in Larchgrove Road. It is now some weeks since it took place, and the police have failed to find the guilty person."

"I want you to give the matter your undivided attention, to strive in every possible way to find out the man."

"You are acquainted with a good many people in this neighbourhood—push your inquiries in every direction. Do your best."

"That you may rely upon my doing."

"Yes, but you see, Mr. Wrench, I don't know why it is, but the police seem to me to be so often in fault."

"In what way, my lord?"

"Perhaps I am wrong in making use of so strong an expression. I don't know that they are positively in fault, but certainly scoundrels of the very deepest dye seem to contrive to elude them. I cannot see why this is. I should have thought, with the extensive machinery we have in the shape of a well-organised police-force, together with the detective de-

partment, that it would have been next to impossible for a man who was well known to be concealed for any length of time."

The detective smiled, and said, "You have no idea, my lord, of the difficulties of detection. They are almost incalculable."

"I have jotted down all the particulars in reference to the case," said the earl, drawing from his desk a paper, "and at the same time I have made marginal notes and suggestions there. You will use your own discretion about adopting them or rejecting them, as you please. The *modus operandi* I leave to you. What money you require Mr. Chicknell will furnish you with, and I do hope and trust you may be successful."

Mr. Wrench bowed, took the paper, and promised to set actively to work, and the earl felt assured that the murderer of Philip Jamblin would not be long at large.

CHAPTER LV.

While all these events were taking place Charles Peace was becoming better acquainted with prison life. He was getting fairly sick of the wearisome monotony of his solitary mode of existence, and although he contrived to get through the quantum of work assigned to him each day, he found it by no means an easy task.

Mat-making was the hardest work done in the gaol in which Peace was confined, and when this was supplemented by picking oakum, as it was in his case, it became still more so.

He had "taken stock," as it is termed, of all the prison officials who had come under his notice. The chief warder of that portion of the prison where he was confined was a portly, pleasant-spoken man of the military type.

He had been a petty officer in a regiment of dragoons, and had seen a good deal of service. His name was M'Pherson, and a good-natured, good-tempered officer he was, but Peace only caught sight of him occasionally.

The under-warder, who had him more particularly in his charge, was rather of a saturnine disposition, and Peace felt that he was not a sort of man he could take into his confidence. He therefore made up his mind to bide his time.

Peace received the greatest kindness and attention from the Rev. John Clay, chaplain of the gaol.

This gentleman gave him the very best advice it was possible to offer under the circumstances.

Peace took the first opportunity afforded him of asking the chaplain what he had best do to get transferred into one of the working wards of the prison.

"It is out of my province to interfere in such matters," said the chaplain; "but your best plan will be to speak to M'Pherson."

"Oh, rot the governor?"

"No; it's left to M'Pherson. He is a privileged warder, and does pretty much as he likes in respect to the working arrangements."

"Good!" muttered Peace to himself. "A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. I shall profit by your advice."

So when he next caught sight of the head-warder going his rounds, he touched his cap respectfully and said:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but can I have a word with you?"

"What is it, my man?" inquired his janitor.

"When is it likely for me to do my work in one of the wards?"

"When? Well, I don't know as I can tell you just now. Do you know any trade? Can you work with the thread and needle, or what?"

"I am a carver and gilder by trade, but can do smith's work as well, and know something about weaving."

"We'll find you a billet shortly, and put you through your facings. Go back to your cell; I'll see what can be done."

"I thank you, sir; I'm much obliged—very much obliged," cried Peace, again touching his cap.

The chief warder made inquiries of his subordinates as to the general demeanour and conduct of Peace; the account they gave was satisfactory, and some two or three days after our hero's interview with him M'Pherson entered Peace's cell and said in a conciliatory tone:

"Well, my man, as I have had a good account of you, I don't see that there is any reason for your not making yourself useful. Come this way."

Peace followed the speaker, and was shown into a ward where a number of men were busily occupied on various articles.

A bundle of coarse cloth was thrown down by the chief warder.

"We are going to make a tailor of you," he said jocosely to Peace.

"I am much obliged, sir, but I am not much of a hand at tailoring."

"No matter; you are willing to learn, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, quite willing."

"Very well, undo that bundle."

Peace did as he was bid, and found various pieces ready cut out for a similar jacket to the one he had on.

"I suppose you know what these are for?" said M'Pherson.

"For a jacket."

"You are quite right, my man." Then, turning to a man beside him, he said, "Give him a needle and thread, and we shall soon see if he takes kindly to the business."

The jacket was a little above his comprehension; but he did his best, and while he was at work M'Pherson came and gave him some valuable hints, and he managed to put the garment together much better than he had anticipated.

"It's not at all bad for a first attempt," said the warder. "You'll do after a bit; with a little more practice you'll be a first-rate hand. Persevere, my man; Rome wasn't built in a day. You like this occupation better than mat-making, I suppose?"

"Oh, dear me, yes!"

"Very well, go on. If you are in any difficulty, ask me, and I'll do what I can to make a soldier—I mean a tailor of you."

The convicts in the gaol where Peace was confined underwent a mild course of treatment. The treadmill had been entirely removed.

It was first established in 1826, and certainly effected some little improvement on the previous system as a means of deterring from future offence, but when views on prison discipline became more enlightened and the transformation of a prisoner became an object of greater solicitude than his punishment, it was found that the treadmill was useless, and worse than useless. When the body was undergoing compulsory and painful exertion the mind was irritated and harassed by the ever-present consciousness of punishment. The labour least liked by prisoners is the treadmill. Its use is to raise sufficient water for the use of the establishment to an immense tank fixed in the roof.

Hand-pumping was at first tried with such questionable success that the labourers were suspected of "shirking," and to prove the charge against them a jury of free workers were called in and set to the task, but, having that blessed privilege, after a trial they dropped the pump-handles and flatly declined "to have any more of it."

Happily for Peace, he was spared this dreadful infliction, as the gaol in which he was confined did not at that time contain a treadmill; therein he might deem himself fortunate.

His new occupation pleased him well enough; it was far better than being cooped up in a narrow cell.

One day, when he was deep in the mysteries of trying to put the different pieces of the jacket together and comparing them with his own, which he had taken off, he was visited by an assistant schoolmaster, who brought him a Bible, prayer and hymn books.

He made him write a few verses of a psalm on a slate to see his handwriting, and, finding it tolerably satisfactory, told him he need not attend school, but during the hour each week when the other members of the ward were at their lessons, he would be at liberty to read or write, and need not continue his work.

He also asked if he wished to write to any of his friends at the next school day or default.

If Peace did not exercise the privilege within a month he would lose it. He, therefore, deemed it advisable to book himself to write the very first opportunity. He was anxious to write to his mother, and when the day arrived that he was to write home he was directed to go to the end of the ward, where he found a number of small tables, all of them with an inkstand, a pen, and a piece of blotting-paper.

He took into his cell a sheet of regulation paper that had been brought to him, on which was already written his name, official number, and the date.

A few lines of printing gave him directions and rules he was not to infringe; he was to confine his writing to the ruled lines—not to write between them or to cross his letter; he was not to give any information respecting any other prisoner or any prison news; was not to write to any improper person, or use any improper language.

Every letter to or from a prisoner is examined by the deputy-governor, who initials it and passes it on to the chap-

lain. He also reads and initials it. Each strikes out anything he considers as infringing the rules, or as improper either for a prisoner to know or communicate.

Knowing his letters to be subject to both an official and clerical examination, Peace was as careful as possible as to what he said.

In the course of a few months he became a tolerably good workman at the tailoring business, and M'Pherson had frequent occasion to compliment him. This worthy fellow took a pride in his ward and the people under his charge, and it was generally acknowledged that every prisoner felt grateful to him, and did his best to keep the old soldier in good humour. He was, in fact, a favourite with the ward. He was always kind to the men under his charge, and it was very rare for his kindness to be abused.

* * * * *

Mr. Wrench felt that he had a difficult task in hand. He searched in vain for Giles Chudley at most of the cheap lodging-houses and thieves' haunts in the metropolis. He sent notices off to the police-stations in the provinces, but he was no nearer to the suspected man.

There was one great difficulty in the matter. Mr. Wrench did not know Chudley—neither did any of his coadjutors. He had a description given him of the man, but this was very vague, and could not be relied on. Nevertheless, our detective took every possible means of tracing out the fugitive. After a rigid and exhaustive search in London and the suburbs, Mr. Wrench began to think seriously of his next best course of action. Certainly the case, as far as it had gone at present, did not look very promising.

Chudley was country born and country bred. The chances were that he would secrete himself in some sparsely-inhabited rural district. The question was, where to look, and this Mr. Wrench could not very well determine. From information received at Scotland Yard there was reason to suppose that a man answering in many points to the description given of Chudley had been seen tramping along one of the roads leading to Liverpool.

When Mr. Wrench was put in possession of this fact, it at once occurred to him that the murderer of Mr. Jamblin was journeying to that town for the purpose of shipping himself for one of the colonies.

He at once determined on paying a visit to Liverpool without further delay. But here another difficulty stood in the way. How could he possibly make sure of his man, even assuming he was fortunate enough to come across him?

But Mr. Wrench was not easily baffled. He telegraphed to Lord Ethalwood, begging him as a special favour to send the girl, Nell Fulford, off at once to Liverpool, with instructions for her to go to the police-station and inquire for him, Wrench.

The earl was quite as anxious as Mr. Wrench was to bring the matter to a successful issue. He deputed Mr. Jamblin to communicate with Nelly, and make known to her his wishes. She at once expressed her willingness to go in search of the murderer of her sweetheart.

Joe Doughty, who heard of the intended expedition, begged of his master to be permitted to go also, and so, after a few hours' notice, Nell and Joe set out together. Upon their arrival at Liverpool they at once made their way to the police-station. A constable was directed to conduct them to the house where Mr. Wrench was stopping.

"Ha'ee got any clue to the scoundrel, sir?" said Joe, when he caught sight of the detective. "I do hope un 'as."

"Not at present," returned Mr. Wrench. "Don't you be too forward, my man. Just keep your tongue between your teeth. I don't want anybody in this town to know our business, and an indiscreet word or two may spoil all. So don't you open your mouth about the matter. Don't say anything to a single individual. Do you understand?"

"Ah, I see, beg pardon; I won't say a word."

"Very well, that's all right, my man. When I need your services, which, to say the truth, I hope I shall shortly, I'll let you know. In the meantime keep dark, be as close as an oyster."

Joe nodded and scratched his head. He came to the conclusion that Mr. Wrench was a wonderful man, and he was overawed by his manner, which was incisive and commanding.

"And my dear Miss Fulford," said the detective, turning towards his female visitor, "it is, I am sure, very kind and good of you to come all this long distance to further the ends of justice, especially as you are at the present time not in your usual health."

"I dunno" care 'bout myself, sir," returned Nell. "I would go to the end of the world to hunt down the vile

wretch—who—who ha' taken an innocent and honourable man's life."

"Certainly, of course, a very proper feeling—very proper indeed," cried Wrench. "I wish everyone was of the same opinion as yourself, Miss Fulford."

"And I am at your service, sir. Have you met with anybody—any suspected person?"

"Not at present. You will have to wait in this town till I have made all the inquiries necessary."

"Ah!" murmured Nell, who was disappointed at not being engaged on active service at once.

Mr. Wrench conducted her to a lodging he had engaged, and told Joe that he was to remain with him.

Mr. Wrench's first night in Liverpool was spent in examining a number of low lodging-houses, which were used by tramps, thieves, and the lower class of itinerants. He took with him Joe Doughty and a sergeant belonging to the constabulary of the town. He was an experienced hand, and knew most of the habitations of this class.

As they entered they were greeted by the mistress of the establishment, who was standing behind a sort of counter, which separated the front entrance from her own private parlour.

"Och, good luck to ye, Mr. Wrinch!" cried the woman, in a strong Irish accent. "An' it's mighty plazed I am to set eyes on your own swate features. Won't ye be afther coming in and saying a kind word or two to a poor old sinful crathur like myself?"

"How are you, Biddy; and how are you getting on?" said Wrench.

"Oh, by the powers, I'm glad to see ye—an' sure, I thought you had forgotten your ould frind entirely—an' be-dad, your brouht frind's with ye—well, the more the wel-come. Step inside, Mr. Wrinch—an' sure, the mashter's not at home, but that's no rason that you should not be spaking to his wife."

The three personages went behind the bar and entered the little room beyond.



"AN' WHAT'LL YOU BE AFTHUR TAKIN'?"

In many of these places there were assembled scores of the most degraded and vicious members of society, who were lying in ambush, as it were, like tigers in a jungle, ready to spring upon and make a prey of anyone who came within the precincts of their lair.

Prisons, treadwheels, penal settlements, gallows, were all vain and impotent as a punishment.

Mr. Wrench and the Liverpool constable entered one of these wretched receptacles for the homeless and lawless. As the miserable occupants were stretched on their dirty shake-downs the policeman flashed his bull's-eye in all directions.

It would be difficult, and indeed almost impossible, to describe to the reader the revolting nature of many of the places visited by the detective and his companions. As the policeman flashed his light on the men in these unwholesome dens, Joe Doughty examined each countenance, but failed to find the man of whom they were in search.

One of the largest establishments of this class was kept by an Irishman named O'Flanagan, and after an inspection of a variety of these places the searchers bent their steps in the direction of that well-known place.

"Ah, sure, you are as welcome as the flowers in May, Mr. Wrinch, I need not tell you that. And what will you be afther takin'—you and your frinds?"

"Nothing just now—we've come on business."

"Oh, sure now, it's business ye've come on," cried the woman in an altered tone. "An' I s'pose, if I may make so bould—I s'pose now, that it's afther some dirty black-guard that you are—an' bad luck to him."

"Something of that sort, I must confess," returned the detective, with a smile, "and for old acquaintance sake, you'll serve me if you can."

"Faith an' I will if it lies in me power; and isn't it a good turn ye did me when I was in the depths of throuble—and am I likely to forget it? Divil a bit, an' what might it be that you may be wanting me to do—Mr. Wrinch?"

"You mustn't speak quite so loud, Biddy," said the detective.

"An' it's quiet I'll be as any church mouse."

Mr. Wrench drew from his pocket the bill relating to the murder in Larchgrove Road; but, unfortunately, reading was not one of Mrs. Flanagan's accomplishments.

She seemed unable to comprehend that the document was headed with the word murder.

"Och, by the powers!" she ejaculated, "it's some murdering spalpeen you'll be afther, Mr. Wrench?"

"Yes, and a hundred pounds reward will be presented to any person or persons who shall give any such information as may lead to his conviction," said the detective. "I will read you a description of the man of whom we are in search."

"May be you might find the man ye want at the fair."

"What fair?" inquired Wrench quickly.

"At Nantwich Hoiring Fair. As your man is in the agricultural line may be he'll be afther going to the fair."

"A good suggestion," said the detective. "When is it held?"

"On the 29th of this month."

"Thanks; it's worth consideration, but we won't detain you longer, and so good night."

"But you'll be for calling agin, I suppose, before you lave the town?"

"Oh, certainly. We shall not lose sight of you. Besides, you know, you may pick up some information."

The landlady looked mysterious and nodded.

Her three visitors took their departure.

"She knows more than she cares to tell," said the sergeant to Wrench.

"You think so?"

"Yes, I do."

"Then we shall have to pay her another visit."

"There are only two ways to work her. Either to wheedle her or put the screw on."

"We've nothing to put the screw on for—have we?"

"I can't say we have, but she's to be worked."

"By money?"

"Not by the reward; that she wouldn't accept upon any consideration."

Mr. Wrench returned to his lodgings very much disappointed. He had hoped to gain some information as to the whereabouts of his man, but his search in the various "padding kens" of Liverpool had been of no avail.

He determined upon going to the docks on the following day, with the view of ascertaining, if possible, what vessels were about to set sail, and who were their passengers.

Liverpool is a big place, and it is not possible to do much in the way of hunting for a person therein in one day, or indeed in a week.

Mr. Wrench did not despair. Something might turn up in the course of a few hours which would alter the aspect of affairs most materially.

He felt certain that Mrs. O'Flanagan could aid him if she chose, but he would not go to her again till he had exhausted his other resources.

In the morning he proceeded by himself to the docks. He went over several vessels, had intercourse with shipowners, captains, stevedores, and provision merchants—was, in short, industriously occupied till nightfall, but failed to reach the desired end. It was likely enough that he had been misinformed.

Giles Chudley might not be in the neighbourhood of Liverpool after all. But it would not do to arrive at that conclusion too hastily.

The police had informed him that more than one person had declared a man answering his description—or, at any rate, something near it—had been seen within a few miles distant from the town.

But then men of his class are so much alike, and people are so prone to jump at conclusions.

Mr. Wrench knew but too well the difficulties attending identification—mistakes were so frequently made.

He spent another day visiting all sorts of odd places in the town, and at night he went to the music halls, taking Joe Doughty with him.

In the course of the following day, Mr. Wrench paid another visit to Mrs. O'Flanagan.

On this occasion he deemed it prudent to go alone, being under the impression that the loquacious landlady might be more communicative in the absence of strangers.

"An' sure, now, it was my own self as said you wouldn't be afther laving the town without jist giving us a frindly call; an' it's happy and proud I am to see ye, Mister Wrench. Any news about the murtherin' divil?"

"None at all, Biddy. My search has not been attended with any satisfactory result."

"Oh, maybe the thief o' the world has hooked it intirely, an' won't show up at all."

"It looks like it. But, I say, missus," whispered

Wrench, in a confidential tone, "you might be a little more candid."

"Well, then, a few nights ago there was a strange chap whom nobody seemed to know came here for a night's lodging. Well, Wrench, be the powers, but I must spake my mind to an ould frind, the vagabond couldn't slape, so some of the bhoys tould me, and kept tossin' about and a sighin' and a groanin' all night. In the morning he was off, never sayin' nothink to nobody."

"And his appearance, was it anything like the description I read to you?"

"Faith, it was—so Pat Murphy said."

"And who is Pat Murphy?"

"He's just one of the boys, one of the regular customers. Begorra, he's as good as gold is Pat."

"No doubt. Anything more?"

"Ah, now, I dunno that there is. Oh, yes. Pat understood him to say that he was bound for Nantwich."

"Mrs. Flanagan, I am deeply indebted to you; accept my best thanks," exclaimed Wrench. "Should anything come of this, you will not be forgotten."

"Oh, kape me out of the bisnis intirely. Do not mintion what I've tould ye to a soul, but make the best use of it. Sure, now, don't I owe you a debt of gratitude? And it's myself as nivir forgets a kindness. Aisy, now, kape dark, and say nothin' about this, or I shall be ruined."

"You may rely upon me," said the detective, again thanking his informant as he passed out of the "padding ken."

Mr. Wrench kept his word. The information he had received from Mrs. Flanagan might be of essential service, or it might turn out a myth. Anyway, he was determined upon following up the slender and uncertain clue he had obtained so unexpectedly.

He at once set off to the town of Nantwich, and took with him Nell Fulford and Joe Doughty.

* * * * *

The glories of Bartholomew Fair, of Greenwich, and a host of others in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, have long since passed away, and it is not at all likely they will ever be resuscitated. But fairs of various descriptions are still held in many parts of England, but they are considerably shorn of their leading attractions.

Mr. Wrench's motive for hastening to Nantwich was to be present at the hiring fair at a small hamlet within a few miles of that place.

On Pack-rag Day (the 29th of September), the serfs of agriculture pack up their clothes and seek fresh masters.

And on this day the farmers, dressed in their Sunday clothes, ride to the mansions of their landlords, their faces bright with honest pride, their leather bags filled with gold coins and bank notes. The scene has been faithfully depicted in Wilkie's celebrated picture of the "Rent Day."

The landlords, seated before their blue bundles of quarter's bills, receive their tenants with smiles of welcome and gratitude—that is, if the latter are furnished with the amount of rent due.

In some parts of England it is still customary among the lords of manors and proprietors of large lands to give a dinner to their tenants on the rent days, as shown in Wilkie's well-known picture.

But these quarterly feeds are now rapidly dying out of date, and will soon no longer exist, except in the hall of some youthful squire, who may be gifted with a dramatic passion for revivals.

Like fairs, these convivial gatherings are fast becoming obsolete.

In the year referring more especially to this history, the hiring fair to which Mr. Wrench was about to pay a visit happened to fall on quarter day; so all the farmers of the neighbourhood paid their rents early, and rode on to the place to engage their carters, shepherds, and farm maids for the ensuing year.

Mr. Wrench was not a man to be a day behind the fair. He came to a halt at a small village within an easy walk of it the day before its fun and frolic was to commence.

He put up at a roadside inn, and secured the best bed in the establishment for Nell Fulford.

This done, he explored the neighbourhood, having for his companion the redoubtable Joe.

Near to the junction of three cross roads, there stood, at the time of which we are writing, a low-looking beershop bearing the sign of the "Travellers' Rest."

This place was a vagrants' lodging-house, and as Mr. Wrench and his rustic companion came within sight of the house the detective regarded it with a considerable amount of interest.

After surveying it for some time he said to Joe Doughty : "As far as the accommodation is concerned, I don't know that I can recommend it, but if you don't mind taking up your quarters in it for one night, it would be as well. It is possible you may be able to pick up some information respecting the man of whom we are in search. You can see me in the morning at the Dun Cow. I would join you, but the chances are that some of the traps in the Travellers' Rest would know me, and that would be fatal to us. You are a stranger—keep your eyes and ears open, and your mouth shut, and who knows but you may gain the hundred pounds reward?"

"I beant 'a-goin' to take a shilling on it, coom what may," returned Joe, in an indignant tone.

Mr. Wrench and Joe returned to the Dun Cow, this being the roadside house in which the former had taken up his quarters.

Our detective was a diplomatist in his own peculiar way.

His object was to remain as unobserved as possible till the day of the fair, but his rustic friend was appointed to what might be termed outpost duty.

When night came on Joe was despatched by the commander-in-chief to the vagrants' lodging-house.

The house in question had at one time been a respectable habitation.

The lower part was built of brick, once red and flourishing, but now dirty and dingy; and about half-way up were boards, once painted white, which took the place of their more solid neighbours below.

The walls below were substantial enough; the yard gate and large fore-court were simply covered with tall grass or graceless weeds. And the stables once filled with prancing or neighing, or, at least, well-fed steeds, were at this time only warmed by the breath of beggars, too poor even to pay a groat for a night's lodging, and who compounded with their host for a twopenny night's straw in the outhouses.

Occasionally, indeed, some benighted and bestormed waggoner, unable to reach the usual place of his sojourn, would unwillingly or unwittingly stop at the Travellers' Rest and allow his horses to share the same fate as the beggars who surrounded them. But such visits were few and far between, and even waggon horses would avoid if they could "the vagrants' lodging-house."

Joe Doughty had been accustomed throughout his life to fare but roughly. He had, however, never made the acquaintance of a low lodging-house, and did not, therefore, know the habits and manners of the people who are accustomed to patronise establishments of this description.

When he arrived in front of the inhospitable looking place known as the Travellers' Rest, he hesitated. All was as still as death. Joe's courage appeared to fail him, and he was half inclined to go back to Mr. Wrench.

The balance was turned in an opposite direction in a few seconds. "A cadger on the fly" (a beggar on the road) with his female companion and three children came up, and made straight for the door.

They entered, and Joe Doughty, seeing that they were well acquainted with the house, followed them.

The landlord of the house looked at his new customers from the door of his small inner room—or bar parlour, as it was termed, out of courtesy. He was a man with an eagle eye, but withal a good-humoured cast of features. In a familiar tone and manner he said to the cadger who had entered :

"Well, Mike, what luck, old man? Which is it, 'browns' or 'wedge,' eh?" Meaning, in plain terms, "Well, Mike, what success have you had? Is it halfpence or silver?"

"Not much 'wedge'" replied the cadger, in a discontented tone. "Browns is the order of the day—people are getting jolly stingy. It's a selfish world, make the best of it."

As he made the last observation, the cadger walked towards a large back room on the ground floor, which was the vagrants' apartment.

Joe Doughty followed, without either a word of civility or salutation with his host or his customers.

He sat himself down on a bench originally rough and uncomely, but which had been polished by the much sitting of the vagrants thereon year after year.

The sight presented to our honest countryman was neither cheery nor inviting, but Joe had made up his mind to take things as they came, and not to murmur under any circumstances.

Joe looked round. The room was filled with vagabonds

of every possible description, but they were of a diversified character.

Near the fire, which was composed of dead burning embers and coke, sat an old man, whose hair was white as the driven snow, and who, to all appearance, was between seventy and eighty years of age.

His eyes appeared to be bright and piercing—certainly they were undimmed by age or care, and he fastened them on Joe Doughty for some considerable space of time. It was evident that he recognised a stranger in the countryman, whom he was endeavouring to reckon up.

"These be hard times, my friend," said the old man, addressing himself to Joe.

"Ay, that they be, master. Work be scarce, and money be scarcer still."

"Umph, yes. It's a bad neighbourhood for highflyers," remarked the old man.

Joe, who did not understand the meaning of the term, said, haphazard, "I suppose it is, sir."

"Yes, very bad."

"But times 'll mend, let us hope," observed Joe.

The old man shook his head and lapsed into silence.

The room was about eighteen feet long by fourteen or sixteen wide. In the daytime it was lighted by two windows which looked out into a sort of half yard and half garden, where there was a pump of good water, and a large stone sink.

The floor consisted of dirty boards, which were, however, sanded every morning.

The room had neither prints, pictures, blinds, nor curtains, such articles being deemed altogether unnecessary.

Around the wall, and fixed to it firmly, were a line of benches, before which were tables, on which the vagrant opened his bag, his towel, his basket, or his wallet.

The favourite benches were those which were placed at the top of the room from the fireplace to each side, which were, in fact, cross benches.

Having discovered a vacant place about the right centre bench, which was fixed to the wall, Joe Doughty made his way to the spot, but as he pushed his way along he met with a reproof from a female, whose supper he disarranged in passing by.

Joe apologised, and the female was gracious enough to accept it, and express herself well satisfied.

This little incident passed unnoticed by the rest of the occupants, all of whom appeared to be intent upon their own business arrangements.

Joe, when he had taken his place, had another glance at his companions, who, to say the truth, would have afforded a painter an excellent study for his canvas.

By the side of the old man sat one of the prettiest girls Joe had seen for many a long day. She was travelling, or, in other terms, begging with her grandfather, who sat next to her.

Whether she was his grandchild no one could tell; she passed as such, and the two were inseparable. Her age was about eighteen.

There was a light in her eye, a rapidity in her step, a fascination in her smile, and a playfulness in her jests and tones which were quite captivating.

Joe had not come to the Travellers' Rest to lose his heart, but the young girl engaged his attention in a remarkable degree.

"She be a purty creature," he murmured to himself, "and be a deal too good for a place like this 'ere."

He did not know, when he apostrophised her, that she had been corrupted by depraved society, and was miserably calous to all moral sentiment.

The old man, her reputed grandfather, "did the lame lurk" during the day—that is, shammed lameness, and at night had his leg unbandaged, and could walk nimbly enough across the room.

He was a picturesque old scoundrel, and his grey hairs doubtless helped him more than his lameness, and enabled him to smoke his pipe, drink his pint, and supply half the same quantity to the girl who devoted herself so uncomplainingly to him.

The old man was now and then irritated by the whispering of "an out-and-out swell vagrant," who sat next his granddaughter and endeavoured to flirt with her.

But the girl did not encourage the amorous swain; she shifted her seat to the other side of the old man, who fell foul of the "swell," whom he soundly rated.

"Shut up! stow it!" exclaimed several, addressing themselves to the young man. "You ain't everybody, and the girl don't want to have any of your fine speeches."

The young man, finding himself in the minority, desisted from further importunities.

Joe Doughty's attention was now attracted to another object, this being the landlord, who had entered the room, and, after having spoken to several of its occupants, he came in front of Joe and said:

"Out or in, young man?"

Doughty, who did not know what he meant, affected not to hear him.

"Why don't you answer?" said the landlord. "Out or in?"

All of a sudden it occurred to our obtuse countryman that the question might relate to his sleeping accommodation.

"Oh, in, if you please, sir," said Joe.

"All right, young man. Fourpence to pay, if you please."

Joe took out his fourpence, and placed it on the table all in halfpence.

"Oh, that's it—is it?" said the landlord, as he discovered three harps on the reverse side of the half-pennies.

"Harp's the word this time, it would seem," said he.

Joe Doughty did not know what he meant by this last observation.

Presently he mustered up courage, and said to the old man, who had previously addressed him:

"What does he mean?"

"Who?"

"The landlord."

"Oh, nothing particular; he takes you for a palmer."

Joe was as wise as ever, but he concluded that a palmer must be a scoundrel of some sort.

"What makes him do that?"

The old man explained matters; he told Doughty that there were a class of thievish vagrants called palmers, who visit shops under the pretence of collecting harp half-pence, and to induce shopkeepers to search for them they offer thirteen pence for a shilling's worth, when many persons are silly enough to empty a large quantity of coppers on their counters to search for the halfpence wanted.

The palmer is sure to have his hand amongst the treasure, and while he affects to search diligently for the harps he contrives to conceal some halfpence in the palm of his hand, and when he removes his hand from the coppers always holds his fingers out straight, so that the shopkeeper has no suspicion that he is being robbed.

This explanation was to a certain extent satisfactory, but Doughty did not feel complimented by being taken for a vagrant of that class; he, however, did not trouble himself much about the matter.

The girl who acted as waitress to the establishment now presented herself, and Joe ordered her to bring him "a pint of beer."

"Penny, threehalfpenny, or twopenny?" said she.

"The best you have, my gal," returned Joe, who forthwith pulled out of his pocket some slices of bread and butter and a piece of German sausage, which Mr. Wrench had provided him with; for, as the astute detective observed, "When at Rome do as Rome does—every tramp brings his prog with him, which he devours before going to bed; and you must do the same."

The pint of beer was brought. Joe asked the old man to have a pint as well—which the latter accepted.

The girl who acted as waitress was what might with justice be termed a character. She was short, crooked, one-eyed, lame on the right leg, flat as a pancake, long as a herring, yellow-white, with a sharp nose, and a mouth the shape of an old-fashioned semicircular door scraper.

She was certainly more useful than ornamental, and her life was a hard one. As far as work went she was a wonder, her master never supposing the possibility of her being tired or worn out.

She was suddenly stupid, and at times insolent, but she went round and round from January to December, like a horse in a mill, and never complained of the hard life she was leading.

The landlord was a big strapping fellow, who had passed some months of his earlier days in a metropolitan prison for sundry acts of petty knavery, but the discipline of the gaol did not suit him and he therefore made up his mind to "pull himself short up," as he playfully explained it.

He married, and took the Travellers' Rest, which he obtained for a "mere song."

He was as strong as a giant, and stood over six feet in height, with strong, sinewy limbs.

His wife was altogether of a different mould. She had once been handsome, but coarse language, coarse associates, combined with a predilection for strong drinks, had converted

her into a faded and fallen beauty—a mere shadow of her former self.

When the landlord had seen his customers supplied with the requisite quantity of beer, he turned to a thick-set, wild, savage-looking man who had a small bulldog at his feet, and who travelled with another man much like himself.

The wild, savage-looking man was a "prig," and belonged to that class of vagrants who are adepts in drawing a purse, watch, or pocket-book from persons in crowded places.

His companion was so much like him that Joe came to the conclusion that he was his brother.

One was talkative, and the other taciturn, and Jim Morgan (for such was the elder brother's name) gave all the orders and superintended all the arrangements. He was evidently commander-in-chief.

The elder might have been twenty-five, the younger some three or four years less.

"In or out, gentlemen," said the landlord, as he eyed the two with something like doubt and suspicion.

"Why, what do you suppose we come here for?" returned Jim Morgan.

"It ain't my bis'nness to s'pose anything," said the landlord. "I only ask a question, which perhaps you will answer at your leisure."

At this sally there was a roar of laughter from the company.

"You're mighty clever in your way, no doubt," cried Morgan, "and in course you are duly appreciated. Your question I will answer at once. We want two separate beds, or the largest-sized double bed which you have to spare."

"Right you are," returned the landlord; "we won't make any bones about the matter. No. 9, first floor, two beds in the room, that will suit you all to pieces. If it don't, you can accommodate yourselves elsewhere, or out, if you prefer it."

"You're jolly independent; but no matter, it's the nature of the animal," said Morgan.

Joe Doughty had been listening to the foregoing conversation, and hence it was he was oblivious to the fact that a stranger had entered the room.

The new-comer threaded his way through the assembly until he had gained the farther end of the room.

It was at this time that Doughty's attention was attracted towards him. There was something in the movement and gait of the man which made Joe pause and consider.

He looked hard at the new-comer, and saw that he was a man with a bushy beard, long elfin locks, and a green shade over his eyes. He did not appear to be acquainted with any of the vagrants, and Joe thought this a little singular.

He seated himself on one of the benches and remained moody and silent for some little time; after which he rose suddenly and wended his way back to the entrance of the room.

As he passed along there was a peculiarity in his movement which caused Joe Doughty to regard him with a searching glance.

"I dunno what to mek on him," murmured Joe. "Tain't a bit loike the varmint I am in search of; but he be creeping along in a rum sort of way—a deal arter the fashion of Giles. But it can't be him; and yet I don't feel quite sartain. I'll wait and watch. Maybe he'll coom back and let un see a bit more on him."

But Joe was wrong in his surmise. The man with the green shade and bushy whiskers did not return.

The landlord came into the room once more to attend to his customers. As he passed, Joe said:

"What has become of the man with the green shade over his eyes?"

"Oh, he's hooked it," returned the host. "Didn't like the looks of you all; he's a deal too particular for his money."

"Has he gone away?"

"Yes, he's stepped it, and arter paying for his shake-down, too. He's a rum 'un!"

"Gone, eh?" exclaimed Joe, scratching his head and looking wonder-struck.

"Ah, surely! What's the odds? We can do well enough without a varmint loike him. Let him go, and be hanged to him."

Joe Doughty was perplexed; the man's sudden departure troubled him. He sat silent and thoughtful for some time, and then he took himself to his bed in one of the upstairs rooms.

But the situation in which he found himself was so new and strange to him that it was a long time before gentle sleep closed his eyelids.

By early morn he arose, and, sallying forth from the

vagrants' lodging-house, he at once hastened to the "Dun Cow," and there awaited in the breakfast-room the appearance of Mr. Wrench.

CHAPTER LVI.

When Mr. Wrench made his appearance in the public room of the "Dun Cow," Joe, after a little circumlocution, explained to his chief his adventures of the previous night.

As the latter listened to the account of the stranger in the vagrants' lodging-house, and his sudden departure, his countenance was irradiated with a smile.

"And this fellow went away without saying a word to anybody?" said Wrench.

"He never so much as opened his ugly mouth," returned Doughty.

"Ah! who knows but he might be the man of whom we are in search?"

"He warn't a morsel loike 'im."

"Fun!" cried Nelly with a sigh.

The fair was held in the public square of a small market town, which was built on the banks of a river. As far as architectural beauty was concerned, it was not much to boast of, for the streets rivalled those of Cairo, which are said to be the narrowest and dirtiest in the world.

For one hour or so after breakfast the occupants of the parlour of the "Dun Cow" contented themselves with watching the passengers in the road from the bay window of their snug little apartment.

Mr. Wrench had letters to answer which were sent from Scotland Yard. There was one also from Lord Ethalwood, in which the writer besought him to do his best to discover the murderer of Mr. Philip Jamblin.

The earl's letter, of course, had to be answered by return of post. Mr. Wrench had little or nothing to communicate at present, but he deemed it expedient to write off and inform his lordship that his injunctions would not be disregarded.



"A DEAL ARTER THE FASHION O' GILES."

"He wasn't?"

"Noa, not a morsel, 'xcept his walk, and that war a goodish bit arter the style of Giles Chudley's."

"All right, Doughty; I don't think you have spent a night in the lodging-house in vain; but you must be hungry. We'll have breakfast, and then make the best of our way to the fair."

Breakfast was ordered and served. Nell Fulford joined her two companions and did the honours of the table.

While partaking of their morning's meal the detective and his two companions observed throngs of persons passing the window, rushing, even at that early hour, to the fair.

"They are taking time by the forelock, Miss Fulford," said the detective, looking towards the window of the parlour.

"Oh, yes; it is always, loike this at fair time. People coom from all parts, far and near."

"There is one thing I wish to impress on both of you," observed Wrench, "and that is to keep as quiet as possible. We'll see all that's to be seen, but we won't appear to be looking for anyone. We are only here to enjoy the fun of the fair—that's all."

When he had finished his correspondence, which was necessarily very brief, the detective informed his two companions that he was ready to accompany them to the fair.

It was early in the day when Mr. Wrench arrived at the fair with his two companions, but nevertheless crowds of persons were already assembled.

As they joined the body of the people the noise was almost deafening, but a noise so like that of people enjoying themselves that he must have been a flinty philosopher who could get out of temper with it.

No gathering of this sort was complete without Richardson's celebrated show, in which a melodrama of a most touching nature was enacted in the brief space of twenty minutes, or from that to half an hour.

Richardson himself at this time was gathered to his fathers.

He was a dumpy, pock-marked man, with a red face and a long brown coat.

Reading and writing were not included in his accomplishments, but he was a kindly-disposed, persevering, honest little man, much given to dirt and the drama, who contrived by praiseworthy industry to amass a large fortune.

It was his boast that some of our most celebrated actors and actresses were, at one time or another, included in his troupe.

The late Edmund Kean in his early career acted at Richardson's Show.

The great Mrs. Pritchard, who played with David Garrick, began life as a performer at fairs.

Numbers of similar instances could be cited of other distinguished members of the theatrical profession who were wont to strut their hour upon the stage at shows and booths.

Although Richardson had passed away, the booth in the fair still bore his name.

"Walk up, ladies and gentlemen; just going to begin!" shouted out a leather-lunged individual on the platform of the show.

"The Bleeding Nun; or, the Midnight Hour," was the powerful drama about to be represented.

After this a brass band struck up, playing the most discordant music it is possible to conceive.

Mr. Wrench and his two companions ascended the steps which led to this temple of the drama, paid their money, and, after waiting a considerable time in the interior of the booth, had the satisfaction of witnessing the drama in question.

When they came out after the performance they were asked by the gentleman on the platform how they liked it, and of course said they were very much pleased.

Upon this the touter turned triumphantly to the gaping crowd below, and again shouted out, "Now's your time, gentlemen and ladies; just going to begin!"

The formula was gone through over and over again during the whole of the day.

As to dwarfs and giants and giantesses, they were innumerable, together with curiosities both natural and unnatural.

Added to all there was the snapping of guns at the nut stalls, the artificial screams of the young women, and the hoarse guffaws of the young men.

Peace and quietness were out of the question; throughout the livelong day there was a ceaseless row and clatter.

The crowd was composed of two distinct classes—those who came for amusement only and those who came only upon business.

Mr. Wrench and his two companions were included in the latter category.

And there were a great many people who went to the fair both for business and pleasure.

Farmers and their wives, of the true old Saxon sort, who went to hire their servants and to spend their money; artful little hussies who intended to enjoy themselves, dancing in the booths, and to pick up fresh acquaintances, or to pull some irresolute swain over that matrimonial precipice on the brink of which he had long been oscillating; and the great mass of boys and girls who had come, to use their own words, "to see the woid beastes and to get bound to the varmers."

It is incident to a fair that persons shall be free from being arrested in it for any other debt or contract than what was contracted in the same, or at least promised to be paid there.

The place visited by Mr. Wrench and his two companions was, as we have already signified, a hiring fair.

Mr. Wrench had kept his eyes open throughout the livelong day. He had, in company with Joe and Nell Fulford, visited most of the shows, but had not met with the man he was in search of, but he did not feel disposed to give up the search as hopeless.

He partook of a substantial meal with his two friends in a small public-house, which stood just outside the fair.

Night drew on apace, but the devotees to pleasure were not sated.

Now the whole company of the very minor theatre were assembled upon the outer platform, and the man with the leathern-lunged voice was as vociferous as ever. He was a little hoarse with constant shouting, but this did not matter—he contrived to make himself heard, shouting at the top of his voice:

"Now's your time, good people; walk up—walk up! You'd better by half come in at once, if you means coming; we are just going to begin. Grand spectacular romantic melodrama as 'ud move the heart of a stone. This way, gentlemen!"

Life and jollity now rolled towards the dancing booths, washing into its stream all those who had been shooting at the nut stalls, or who had been to see the calf with six legs, the wonderful donkey, or the live mermaid, or had been peeping in at the panorama of the "Orful Massacres in the Indies," in which the artist, wisely sacrificing truth to effect,

had painted the murderous Sepoys as black as saucepans, with blubber lips, frizzly hair, white waistcloths, and long spears, dripping with gore.

Between two gingerbread stalls there was a brave battle between the crowds.

Crowd No. 1 making for public-house, L.H.; crowd No. 2 pushing for dancing-booth, O.P.

Both crowds were composed of free Britons, who will never believe that retreats are sometimes judicious.

Three men in particular might have been seen pushing first one way and then the other, as if they rather enjoyed the scramble than otherwise.

This did not escape the observation of the others, who cried:

"Now, then, you, sir, keep yer elbows to yerself. You ain't everybody."

"Look at the old bloke with the green goggles, how uneasy he is to find himself somew'eres. Keep still, old gentleman, we'll make it all right for you arter a bit."

"Order—silence! Where are you shoving to, yer fool?" cried a stout farmer. "Haven't ye ever bin to a fair afore?"

"Take care of your pockets!" cried a policeman, from the outside, "you as has got anything in 'em," he added, with official sarcasm.

"All right, bobby, we're fly—all on us regularly up to the knocker."

It is impossible to say how long the contest might have lasted had not several persons cried out that they had been robbed, and called out to the police. An old woman declared that she had had her pocket picked.

Three policemen now charged the crowd and knocked down an old man and two boys who had done nothing.

After which they clumsily noted down the depositions of the plundered ones in their pocket-books, with looks of solemn authority and words of the obscurest promise.

Half-an-hour passed, and the two crowds ceased their wrestling.

Mr. Wrench and his two companions, who had become hemmed in, were now enabled to make their escape; they had been borne along by crowd No. 1, and during the rush they had no means of extricating themselves.

When, however, they got clear of the mob of malcontents, they passed out of the fair with all convenient speed.

At some short distance they discovered a small tavern, bearing the sign of the Lord Cornwallis.

They made for this to partake of some refreshment.

There was an awe-stricken semi-circle of rustics at a little distance, before whom stood an enlisting sergeant—his features bloated and reddened from beer and alcohol—beckoning with his naked sword in his hand.

He had the gift of the gab, and the words he was giving utterance to fell glibly enough from his lips.

"Now, my fine fellow," he cried, in a thick, husky voice, "don't hesitate. A fine chance offers itself. Take the Queen's money, and join our gallant comrades in the East. Now's your time; but don't all speak at once. Happy is the man who enlists in our crack regiment. What say you, comrade?"

"Don't 'ee do nothink o' the sort, lad. Don't 'ee listen to what 'ee ses," cried a woman, standing by. "I know what he be. He only talks loike that 'cos he gets so much a head for every fresh fool he takes in. He can talk and tell lies by the bushel, but don't 'ee be gammoned by him—and don't 'ee bleeve a word as he ses."

The rubicund face of the enlisting sergeant became redder than ever as he listened to the words which fell from the lips of the young woman.

He was greatly incensed, and looked upon her with ineffable disgust.

"You are an audacious, impudent hussy!" he cried, with the fierce gesture of a Hamlet at the Bower Saloon, "and some wholesome chastisement would do you good, my lady. If you were a man, I'd give you something for yourself, but a British soldier never raises his hand against a woman."

Having delivered himself of this heroic declaration, he turned towards the rustics, and said, in a confidential tone:

"You've got too much sense to take any heed of what a poor, half-witted creature like her has to say. Anyone can see that she has not got her right change."

"You've got your change, old man, and no mistake," returned the woman, giving him a playful push in the chest, which sent him reeling against the wall. "Why, you're screwed, old man," and added, "You're a nice sort of general, ain't ye?"

(To be continued.)

So M. Gouffé's death-warrant was signed as Gabrielle and her lover went across to London on a short jaunt.

After a day or two spent in seeing the sights of London, and generally enjoying themselves, this precious pair of scoundrels further consulted, and definitely settled on their plan for the killing of Gouffé and the subsequent disposal of his remains. Then they returned to Paris about the middle of July.

It was decided that the murder should take place in Gabrielle's apartments, and, to avert suspicion, she went to an agent and arranged to rent the ground floor of a house in the Rue Tronson Ducoudray, a small street not far from the Madeleine Church, giving her name as Mdlle. Labor-dette. While arranging for these rooms Gabrielle stopped in an hotel, and was visited by her lover Michel. One day he came in with a bundle of canvas under his arm, which he took up to his mistress's apartment. For the next few days she was busy sewing. At the same time Eyraud was also superintending the arrangements in the new quarters. The

that the latter had better be careful or else he might be cut out in that quarter.

That evening Eyraud and Gabrielle dined at a restaurant quite close to the Madeleine, with Rémi, Launay as their guest. That gentleman had no suspicion of the fate which he had escaped, and was the life of the party. Eyraud was a little dull, but the charming Gabrielle was sparkling with humour. Dinner over, Launay took his leave, while Mdlle. Bompard and her paramour went to their apartments to await the arrival of their victim. By way of preparation, Gabrielle took off her out-of-door costume and arrayed herself in a loose sort of tea-gown, confined at the waist by a red and black silk girdle. Presently a knock was heard at the door. Eyraud hurriedly slipped into the alcove, and was hidden by the curtain. The next moment old Gouffé entered.

"Good evening, M. Gouffé," said the fair damsel. "M. Eyraud was forced to go out for a short time, but will be back in about half-an-hour. Won't you wait?" Nothing loth, Gouffé sat down and commenced to chat to Gabrielle,



GABRIELLE COVERED HIS MOUTH AND NOSTRILS.

suite consisted of a couple of rooms, or rather of a large room, which served as a sitting-room, and an alcove, separated from it by a curtain, which was the bedroom. To the wall of the bedroom Eyraud fastened a pulley, opposite to a hole which Gabrielle cut in the heavy curtain. Through the pulley he passed a strong rope, testing it to see that it was perfectly stretched and ran smoothly through the block. In front of the curtain, in the sitting-room, the sofa was placed, and the rest of the furniture of the room was simple, but good. All was then ready for the sacrifice.

On the morning of July 27 Eyraud and Gabrielle Bompard loitered about on the road between M. Gouffé's house and his office. Presently they saw the old gentleman stumping down the road. Eyraud went up to him and, tapping him on the shoulder, said, "I want to speak to you for a moment." The writ-server turned, and, seeing Eyraud, replied, "I know your address, and I will call on you this evening." He then went on his way to business. Later in the day Eyraud managed to let the old fellow know that he was to call on him at the apartments in the Rue Tronson Ducoudray, and not at his own house, intimating that there he would find someone to entertain him if he was kept waiting any time. "Without doubt, la jolie Gabrielle!" thought the poor old libertine, and he winked at Eyraud facetiously, intimating

using the most extravagant love terms to her, for he had made several attempts to gain her favours before. At last, at his request, she came and sat beside him on the sofa. In a few instants she was on his knee, and he commenced to fondle her and to express his violent love for her. Gabrielle led him on by her replies, until he declared that, if she would abandon Eyraud and take up her quarters under his protection he would never desert her.

"But, sir," mockingly answered Gabrielle, "no one could desert me; I should strangle them just like this." And she commenced to take off the silken cord which was round her waist.

"You would not strangle your poor old Gouffé?" croaked out the miserable old roué, as he showed his yellow fangs and leered at her hideously. "You could not strangle him, for he loves you too much."

"But I would, monsieur; I should do it like this," chirruped Gabrielle, as she passed the cordelière, which she had tied into a slip-knot, over his head and adjusted it neatly round his neck. All the while Gouffé laughed, and swore that he loved being tickled by her dainty hands. While she caressed him Gabrielle passed the end of the silken rope through the hole in the curtain to Eyraud, who was waiting for it. Still Gabrielle practised her arts on the unconscious

Gouffé, while her accomplice in the alcove was knotting the cord to the rope which was reeved through the pulley.

Suddenly there was a choking sound, as of a muttered curse. Gouffé was gesticulating wildly, waving his arms about frantically, the while he rapidly grew black in the face. With her tiny white hands, which showed up dazzlingly against the livid countenance of the writ-server, Gabrielle covered the mouth and nostrils of her would-be lover, while with her knee against his chest she prevented him from attempting to rise. In the next room was Eyraud, his foot against the wall, pulling at the rope as hard as he could, striving to strangle the huissier.

As he flung his arms wildly round, Gouffé pulled one half of the curtain to one side, exposing to view the whole scene.

What a picture it must have made!



The whole was placed in a trunk.

There on the sofa was the struggling, choking old reprobate, his eyes speedily growing dim, his eyeballs starting from their sockets, his tongue, a deep purple colour, hanging out of his lips, his whole countenance betokening agony and terror, odious, ghastly, repulsive. Half kneeling, half reclining on his bosom, was the harlot Bompard, her open-fronted gown disarranged by the convulsions of her victim, disclosing her shapely form, while with her soft white palms she strove to aid in the stilling of the breath of the poor creature who had just protested his admiration for her. What a look of devilish ferocity lit up her eyes! What malice was dis-

played on her countenance, the last sight the dying Gouffé saw on this earth! These were in the full light of the room. Away in the shadow was the arch-fiend Eyraud, straining his muscles at the rope which was slowly strangling the writ-server, the half light giving him the appearance of a devil rather than a man. What a picture for the artist of the Inferno!

A few more struggles, a few more gasps for the breath that would not come, and all that was left of M. Gouffé was a corpse stretched out across the sofa. Their work was done for the present, and Gabrielle and Michel could rest for a moment or two and realise the first sensations of the followers of Cain. They were at last united, but as murderers, bound together by one common, guilty secret. Their union was the union of blood, sealed by the sacrament of carnage. For a while they stood gazing at their handiwork; and then Eyraud took what little money there was out of the pockets of the murdered Gouffé, together with his keys, and went off to his office to despoil the place; Gabrielle remained in the room with the corpse. She was not afraid, even the fate of the murderess had no terror for her in those hours which immediately succeeded the awful tragedy.

An hour later Eyraud returned, angry, disappointed, empty-handed. In M. Gouffé's office he had found nothing whatsoever. He had taken a life for nothing; that troubled him little. He had risked his own head to no purpose; that was quite a different matter, and he was very angry with his accomplice. However, the deed had been done, and could not be undone. The disfigured corpse on the sofa stared him in the face. It was no time for bemoaning the hard luck which had befallen him. Something must be done. With Gabrielle's assistance he took all the clothes off the body, carefully retaining everything that he found in the pockets; then he cut the head off, hacking away at the flesh, and disarticulating the vertebrae of the neck to avoid sawing the bone. That done, he told Gabrielle to fetch her needlework, and from the bedroom she produced a roughly constructed sack which she had been fashioning while at her hotel, into which the body was stuffed. This was then sewn up in oilcloth, and the whole placed in a trunk which had been purchased in London for the reception of the victim's remains. That done, Eyraud thought that it was time for him to have a little rest, so he sat down to drink brandy and talk over the events of the evening with his mistress. Deeper and deeper he drank, varying his potations with champagne; till it was almost daylight, when they both went to bed in the alcove adjoining the room which contained the mutilated remains of M. Gouffé, and the awful crime which they had committed did not spoil their slumbers when he and Gabrielle got to sleep.

Next morning a commissioner was called, and the trunk driven to the station, where tickets were taken for Lyons. There a carriage was hired, Eyraud saying that it was not necessary for the livery stablekeeper to send a coachman, as he was accustomed to driving, and he and Gabrielle drove along the banks of the Rhone to a thicket near the village of Millery. Arrived there, the bundle was taken out of the trunk and thrown into a ditch, where the criminals trusted it would long remain. The box was carried to another part of the copse, and after being battered about a good deal to give it the appearance of having been discarded on account of its age, it was abandoned. Eyraud and Gabrielle then returned to Paris. The first thing Gabrielle did was to return to the rooms in the Rue Tronson Ducoudray to fetch Michel's hat, for in the hurry of the moment he had gone to Lyons wearing the hat of his victim. The dead man's clothes were then destroyed, and after obtaining a small sum of money from his wife, Eyraud vanished. A few days later Gabrielle also disappeared, and rejoined her guilty lover, having first of all obtained a sum of 5,000 francs from Madame Eyraud's brother.



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Shocking Discovery
by a Little Girl.

"Death of one person can be paid but once;
And that She has discharged."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Antony and Cleopatra."



IT is one of those calm Sunday mornings belonging to the old-fashioned English winters that, decades ago, made our country so picturesque. The sky is a steel-blue, and the texture of the leafless trees and hedges is very delicate, for covered with a light hoarfrost, twigs and branches sparkle under the pale yellow sun, which throws a cream-like tint over the fields mantled in snow. The birds are singing gaily, and the musical sound of the church bells is borne clearly by the frost-laden breeze far away over the great Wiltshire Downs.

It is Sunday, January 18, 1874, and Purton, a village about four miles from Swindon, is at peace, its inhabitants enjoying the delightful morning, as, in their Sunday best, they tread over the crisp, frosty roads to the place of worship, giving to each other glad "good mornings" as they pass along. The grey smoke curls up fantastically from the cottage chimneys, giving life to the quiet scene, and suggesting that Sunday's bit of boiled pork is bubbling over the burning log of wood or the little piece of beef is browning as it rotates upon the spit before the bright coal fire. There is warmth and comfort enough for a king within those cottage walls, and when man and boy, woman and child, return to their happy little homes with the last morning hymn still vibrating in their ears, there will be the clatter of plates and rattling of knives and forks to another tune—and a merry one, too.

But there is one small cot, standing alone, from which no signs of life issue, and as the good folk of Purton pass by, they wonder that old Joe Grymes is not upon the threshold of his door, for even if he does not make a practice of joining the worshippers on the Sabbath, he can be seen usually with his pipe as his friends pass by, to give them the time of day. The door is closed, however, and there is no sign of the old fellow who lives there, and has lived there all his long life, for he was born in that little room behind the small casement, with its tiny, lead-framed panes of glass. And that was when George III. was king, the very year in which occurred the mutiny at the Nore, and the great Buonaparte's name was being used to frighten children. Old Joe Grymes had seen his friends' grandchildren married, and was really a part and parcel of Purton—an institution, in fact, attached to the village, and looked upon as an oracle in the village "pub.," and as an authority upon all matters which regulated the past of Purton, and no mean critic in respect to the present and future prospects of the place.

Little wonder, then, that Mr. Joseph Grymes was missed among his fellows upon this particular Sunday morning as they trooped to church, and speculated as to what was amiss with the old chap. But nobody inquired for him, and when

the church bells had "rung in" and ceased, there was a peculiar silence reigning, as if nature had hushed all things.

In one of the small habitations near to the cot occupied by Joe Grymes lived a woman named Woodward. Both were in Bentham Lane, about mid-way between Purton and Purton Stoke. The woman had been ailing for some time, and had not gone to church, keeping her little girl, Fanny, to help her in the housework. They were very poor people, and often found the old man Grymes of service to them, for he was never without a shilling or two, always had his cellar well stocked with wood and coal, and there was always a good piece of bacon hanging in the little living-room of his humble cot.

It was no unusual thing for Mrs. Woodward to send her daughter for the loan of a lump of coal, a log of wood, or even a sixpence, when they were in need, and the old gentleman never refused. On this beautiful winter's morning Fanny was sent to the neighbouring cottage to ask Mr. Grymes to oblige her mother with a lump of coal to make up the fire with, and the little girl tripped lightly across the road and down the lane to the old man whom she loved so well, and who was always so good to her.

She quite expected to see him in the garden of his cottage, but all was quiet, and the place seemed deserted. Rapping at the door gently, she called out, "May I come in, Joe? It's only me—Fanny." But there was no answer, and the little maid placed her ear to the keyhole, then knocked again. Still no response. Then, raising the latch, she quietly opened the door and entered. As she did so, she had a spectacle revealed to her which held her for a moment spellbound in a grip of silence. Then, uttering one long, piercing shriek, she rushed from the room and fled to her home.

"Oh, mother! mother!" she cried, as soon as she could find speech, "old Joe is on the floor in a fit, and there's such a lot of blood all over the place!" and she covered her eyes with her little hands as if to shut out the dreadful sight she had beheld.

Mrs. Woodward at once made her way to the old man's cottage, and there discovered that there had been a fearful tragedy enacted. Poor Joe Grymes lay upon the floor in a great pool of blood, his head resting upon a low easy-chair in which he used to sit at eventide. The old man's livid face was turned upwards, his glazed eyes looking towards the ceiling, and the jaw dropped, whilst there was an agonised expression upon the ghastly face, made more terrible by the flood of sunshine which entered the window and fell direct upon the wrinkled brow and silvery hair. There was a terrible gaping wound, quite eight inches long, extending from the side of the head right down to the chin. The deed had evidently been done with a great bill-hook, which lay on the floor beside the murdered man, for it was smothered with blood, and had taken away with it a quantity of hair, and cut deeply into the woodwork of the chair.

Fearful force must have been used, and death must have been sudden enough. The poor woman almost fainted at the sight, but, recovering herself, she went to the body and placed her hand upon the forehead of the old man. The icy coldness gave her a shudder, and she knew that poor old Joe was past human aid. Closing the door upon the dead, she hurried home, and quickly getting on her shawl and bonnet, went, accompanied by her daughter, in the direction of the church, in order to give the alarm. It was her intention to interrupt the service, but on her arrival the organ was playing loudly, and the congregation was dispersing. The news was soon spread amongst them that old Joe Grymes had been murdered, and a dozen or more set off running in the direction of his cottage, the majority of the people following on at a quick pace. What they saw convinced them only too clearly that there had been foul play, and messengers were at once despatched for the police.

In a very short space of time Inspector Stephens and Superintendents, North, and Woodman, of Swindon and Malmesbury, were on the spot, and after an examination of the premises the body was removed to await the inquest. Without a moment's delay the police were about scouring the country for suspicious-looking people, and inquiries were made on all sides, the villagers joining in the search. The doctor gave it as his opinion that the murder had been committed on the Saturday, but by whom or from what motive nobody could conjecture. A search made on the following day resulted in the discovery of cash and important documents, amongst the latter being the copy of a will in which Joseph Grymes had inherited £300, and letters from a firm of solicitors showing that he had been in receipt of some £12 annually for a considerable time, that being the interest upon the capital.

In the dead man's pockets were discovered about three pounds in gold and silver, whilst his two watches that he was known to have possessed had not been taken. It was evident then that robbery had not been the motive, and old Joe Grymes was so much respected and loved that he was supposed not to have an enemy in the world. At the coroner's inquest a verdict was returned of Wilful Murder against somebody unknown, and the police had about as perplexing a job as ever fell to their lot to find a solution.

Everybody had a different version of the motive, and not a few inventions were indulged in, which caused the authorities no end of trouble. No less than six arrests were made, and the justices had a busy time of it for some weeks—one after another being brought before them only to be examined and discharged for the lack of evidence.

At length it was whispered about that the police had a clue and were on the right track. Somebody remembered that a villainous-looking tramp had been seen in the vicinity of the cottage on the Friday and Saturday prior to the dis-

covery of the murder and described him. As if by a sudden and universal inspiration, at least a dozen other people recalled the fact, and one man remembered seeing the fellow washing his hands in the pond, and he was not quite sure when he came to think about it that it wasn't blood that he was removing.

Another party informed the police that they recognised this self-same tramp as a man whose name was William Bartholomew, who formerly worked in the neighbourhood as a shepherd, and Mrs. Woodward declared that she had seen him go in the direction of Joe Grymes's house on the Saturday before her daughter had called there and discovered the murder. Immediately there was a hue and cry for Bartholomew, and after much trouble he was run down at a common lodging-house at Gloucester, at which place he bore an infamous character. At another similar place at Wootton Bassett he had been refused admittance, and altogether Mr. Bartholomew had a very bad record. A warrant was issued for his arrest, and the county papers published paragraphs headed "Capture of the Purton Murderer," and everybody seemed satisfied that the right man had been secured at last.

William Bartholomew, however, was one of those hang-dog fellows who was cunning enough to know nothing and to say less. Week after week he was examined before the justices and remanded, but nothing could be got out of him further than a statement that he had been through Purton on that particular Saturday, that he had washed his hands in the pond, and that he had passed by the cottage occupied by Joseph Grymes. At the same time he swore positively that he had not seen the deceased for months past.

His persistency and resolute adherence to his statements at length tired out the justices, and they were, for lack of evidence, compelled to give him his discharge, although many to this day declare that it was he and he alone who committed the foul murder, for on a former visit he had called upon the old man and asked him to lend him money, and Grymes had made this statement to more than one of his acquaintances.

The magistrate gave him a rare lecture as to his conduct, and, threatening to commit him as a rogue and vaga-



POOR JOE LAY DEAD UPON THE FLOOR.

And the harmless poor old man's murderer was never discovered; but Joe Grymes rests peacefully in the little churchyard through which he played so often when a child and through which he had passed so many times to marriages, christenings, and funerals, and for years afterwards flowers were placed upon the grave by little Fanny Woodward and the many children who loved the old man.

It is related of a popular solicitor that he recently called upon another brother in the profession and asked his opinion upon a certain point of law. The lawyer to whom the question was addressed drew himself up and said: "I generally get paid for what I know." The questioner drew half-a-crown from his pocket, handed it to the other, and coolly remarked: "Tell me all you know and give me the change."

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The Wolverton Tragedy.

"Then asked him in a business way,
Kindly but cold: 'Is thy wife dead?'
The cobbler meekly bowed his head;
'She is,' came struggling from his throat."
—LONGFELLOW, "Tales of a Wayside Inn."



PERHAPS one of the worst features of a state in which public opinion has declared itself in opposition to criminal jurisprudence, is the tendency to adopt a line of defence calculated to diminish the heinousness of a crime by imputing its commission to motives other than the real, thus creating around the guilty an atmosphere of fictitious excellences, by the aid of which the deed wears no longer a criminal aspect, but is elevated into the sublimity of an act instigated by the nobler passions of

humanity, carried, under peculiar circumstances, a little to excess.

A fouler and more atrocious murder than that committed in the month of July, 1867, by George Britten, has, perhaps, been but rarely recorded in the annals of crime. The facts of the case are as follow: George Britten had been a farmer for several years prior to that date, but for some time before the murder with which we now propose to deal, he had lived a life of retirement. He had been married for many years, and the issue of the union was one son, about seven years of age at the time of which we are writing. For about four months prior to the crime, Britten had dwelt with his wife in a cottage in the village of Wolverton, distant about four miles from Frome, on the road to Bath, and fronting the turnpike road. Their means appear to have been limited, for the cottage was a small one, and they kept no servant, and Mrs. Britten, being a thrifty, industrious woman, did all the housework, with the occasional assistance of a charwoman.

Adjoining the cottage, and standing at right angles to it, was a malthouse, which was occupied by a Mr. Moger, a neighbouring farmer, and the prisoner had no occasion for access to it. On Saturday, July 20, 1867, as a labouring man named George Rogers was going to work about four o'clock, passing along the turnpike road, he saw a considerable quantity of smoke issuing from the malthouse. He aroused the neighbourhood, including the accused, and the fire was ultimately subdued. A body was found, partially burnt, which proved to be that of a human being, and was afterwards shown to be that of Mrs. Britten. Late in the day a post-mortem examination was held, and four serious wounds were found on the head, which were proved at the trial to have been the cause of death. These wounds were all inflicted with a blunt instrument. It was clear that the poor woman had been foully dealt with, and suspicion fell upon Britten, the husband of the deceased. The police were immediately put into possession of the facts, and Superintendent Duggan, of Frome, arrested the suspect.

At the inquest, held by Dr. Wybrants at the Red Lion Inn, Wolverton, on Monday, July 22, the whole of the ghastly business was laid bare. The atrocity of this shocking tragedy is almost beyond belief, and the sight to the jury was perfectly staggering. Every detail went to show beyond doubt that it was one of the most cold-blooded murders on record.

To the malthouse of Mr. Moger access could be easily gained by climbing the wall which separated Britten's premises from that building. The prisoner had written a long confession on the Sunday, and this was handed to the coroner and the jury. When the various witnesses had been heard, a verdict of "Wilful Murder" was returned against Britten, and he was committed for trial at the ensuing Wells Assizes.

On Saturday, August 10, George Britten was brought up

for trial before Mr. Justice Willes. An hour before the appointed time (10 o'clock), the approaches to the Crown Court were thronged. When the doors at the back of the hall were opened there was a desperate struggle for position, and many were unable to gain admission. Britten was described in the calendar as a farmer, 51 years of age. He was a little over medium height, with thin, iron-grey hair and whiskers, and rather slightly built. He was dressed entirely in black. As soon as the jury were sworn, he was accommodated with a chair, and then he leaned his head on his hands, so that only the back of his head could be seen above the level of the dock. Mr. T. W. Saunders and Mr. Edlin were counsel for the prosecution, and Mr. Prideaux, Q.C., and Mr. Folkard defended the accused.

In reply to the arraignment of wilfully murdering his wife of malice aforethought, the prisoner said, in a low voice, and without lifting his eyes, "Guilty of the act, but not of malice aforethought."

The first witness called was George Rogers, who said he was going to work on Saturday, July 18, and, when passing prisoner's house, he saw smoke issuing from the malthouse which adjoined the prisoner's residence. He gave the alarm, and two men came to the spot. He called the prisoner and knocked loudly several times at the door. Nobody answered at first, but, on witness throwing gravel at the bedroom window nearest the malthouse, the accused moved the corner of the blind and peeped out. Rogers said, "Mr. Britten, your malthouse is on fire, and if you don't get up you will be burned in bed." He said, "Oh!" and a few minutes afterwards came down. By that time the door of the malthouse had been broken open, and the prisoner exclaimed, "You had better shut the door, or the wind will fan the fire so that you won't be able to put it out. The best thing you can do is to get water." This advice was acted upon, and in about half an hour the flames were extinguished. Rogers saw something lying on a board where the fire was. He thought it was a pig, but somebody said it was the body of a man, which so frightened him that he ran away. There were pieces of coke and wood found beneath the body. The prisoner, the witness said, took hold of the end of the board and tipped the body over on to the spot where the fire had been.

John Rogers, James Preston, Edward Francis Moger, James Dyer Parsons, Thomas Holoway, and several other witnesses gave evidence as to having seen the body after the fire had been extinguished. It appeared from their evidence that the body of the deceased woman—for examination had proved the body to be that of a female—was found lying upon what may be properly called "a funeral pile," composed of coke and faggots overlaid by a couple of planks.

Superintendent Deggan said: "On Saturday morning, July 20, between six and seven o'clock, I went to the malthouse of Mr. Moger, and there saw the body of a female very much burnt and disfigured, a sack under and a sack over it. I examined her head closely, and saw a quantity of blood under the back part of it, a mark under the left eye and on the forehead, and another on the left side, which led me to believe that she had been murdered. I then went to the house of the prisoner, and called him downstairs. I told him to sit down on a chair. I then said:

"'Britten, where's your wife?'

"He replied, 'She's not here; she's gone to Frome, and on to West Penard to see her friends.'

"I said, 'Did she take anything with her?' and he replied, 'Yes, a bundle containing a dress and other articles.' I said:

"'Britten, come into the malthouse with me.'

"He did so. I said, 'Look at that body. Is not that your wife?' He answered:

"'It is not.'

"I then said, 'Look at her hair, head, and teeth.' Prisoner went down on his knee, and I lifted her head and showed the hair and pointed to the two prominent teeth in front. He put up his hands, trembled very much, and said:

"'I cannot recognise her.'

"I said, 'Look again,' and he looked very close to the body, and said:

"'I believe it is; I am sure it is her.'

"I then took him into custody, and charged him at the Frome police-station with wilfully murdering his wife and setting fire to Mr. Moger's malthouse for the purpose of consuming the body. Prisoner said:

"'It's a bad job.'

"On the following day the prisoner's brother-in-law, Mr. Woolley, came to see him. The prisoner handed something to Mr. Woolley, which I snatched away. It was a long written statement by the prisoner, confessing the crime, but alleging he did it in a moment of anger and jealousy."

It appeared from this statement that he had made an imputation against her fidelity, and she received it with a derisive laugh—a reception of the accusation quite compatible with her perfect innocence. He at once became enraged, seized the first thing coming to hand, a heavy piece of lead, and with that inflicted upon his victim blow after blow until she was a corpse. Finding that he had done more than he intended, he, first of all, determined to commit suicide, but feared to do so lest his son might be frightened out of his reason on coming downstairs and finding both his parents corpses. He was fearful also that God would not forgive self-murder, although he might forgive the murder of another. He then carried the body over the wall into the malt-house, and, having built up a pile of coke and wood, he lighted it, and then went back to his house.

Mr. Henry Franklin Parsons, surgeon, deposed: "At eight o'clock on Saturday morning I examined superficially the body of a woman in a malthouse belonging to Mr. Moger. It was very much burnt. I made a post-mortem examination of the body in the afternoon. The right foot was bent up under the left knee. On the forehead, under the roots of

to the scaffold he met Calcraft, who at once pinioned his arms, and the chaplain ascended the scaffold. He was followed by a warder, then came the unhappy culprit, next Calcraft, and a second warder. Without turning his head, Britten walked with a firm step to the centre of the platform, stopping under the horizontal beam. Mounting a small bench, Calcraft deftly covered the man's face with a white cap, tied his feet, slipped the rope round his neck and securely fastened the other end round the beam. In three minutes everything was ready for launching the wretched culprit into eternity. The doomed man shook hands with Calcraft, and also very earnestly with the chaplain and warders. The latter four then left the platform, and almost immediately the bolt was drawn, and the drop fell with a crash that elicited an audible shuddering exclamation from most of the spectators. Britten seemed to jump as if trying the floor beneath him, and then fell with a heavy jerk. The wretched man appeared to struggle hard in dying. The upper half of his body remained visible above the lodge parapet. The chest heaved several times, and the hands were moved up and down. In a few minutes all was still. The crowd slowly



HE CARRIED THE BODY INTO THE MALT-HOUSE.

the hair was a curved, contused wound about one and a-half inches in length. On the left temple was a smaller one, about an inch in length. At the back of the head was a large V-shaped wound, with the apex downward, each line about two inches in length. The skull was exposed in one or two places, but not fractured. The left temporal muscle was completely broken up and reduced to a pulp. Death was caused by concussion of the brain. The blows must have been inflicted with a blunt instrument. The piece of lead (produced) would have caused them."

Mr. Saunders summed up for the prosecution, and Mr. Prideaux addressed the jury for the defence in a speech which occupied an hour and a-half, his defence being that the act was committed in a moment of blind and insane fury, and not with "malice aforethought."

His lordship having summed up, the jury, after three minutes' consultation, returned a verdict of "Guilty of wilful murder," and the sentence of death was passed in the usual way.

On Thursday, August 29, 1867, George Britten was executed at the County Gaol, Taunton. Calcraft was the executioner. Just before nine o'clock Britten was conducted by two warders across the yard to the entrance lodge, the chaplain walking in front, reading the solemn service for the Burial of the Dead. On the first landing of the steps leading

dispersed. The body was cut down at 10 o'clock, and, after the inquest, was interred within the precincts of Taunton Gaol.

Woman as Executioner.

MANY new fields open out to women as the years roll on, but some old ones close against them. We have no female magistrates to-day, no ladies sharing the functions of the judge at assizes, of which in the dim past there have been, here and there, instances. And, thank goodness, we have now no female executioner. There was one in the last century, "Lady Betty," as she was nicknamed. How she came to be appointed is part of the story of the bad old days in which she lived. She was a widow of low reputation. Her son, whom she had not seen for many years, returned one night possessed of money, and, desiring to know something of his mother's character, sought lodging at her house without betraying his identity. She, not knowing him, murdered him during the night; was tried, condemned, and sentenced to death. With her were to be hanged several other criminals. An executioner was not forthcoming, so she volunteered to give the others the drop on condition that her own life was spared. She performed her task, and was thereafter appointed executioner for the Connaught Circuit. For years she used publicly to flog criminals, and was said to be specially severe on her own sex. "Lady Betty" was a name to conjure with in the nursery, a name possessing greater terror for the refractory child even than that of "Old Boney."

America's Eugene Aram.

REVISITS THE SCENE OF HIS
CRIME AND IS ELECTROCUTED.

"Drawn by some hidden Power,
Back to his death he came
—BARRATT, "The Exile."



THE fatal fascination of the murderer for the scene of his deed of blood has furnished the English novelist and poet with a theme of all-absorbing interest. America has had her Eugene Aram, too. John Schmidt might well, had he lived in that age, have taken the place of the conscience-smitten schoolmaster as the central figure of Bulwer Lytton's enthralling story of real life. An irre-

sistible impulse urging him to go and see the dead boy whom he battered to death led Schmidt to his doom in the electrocution chair, just as a similar "mighty yearning" sent Aram to the gallows.

In the year 1882 John Schmidt was earning a good income as a farm-hand at Chatham, in the State of New York, when there tripped across his path a winsome widow, by name Dora Sophia Johanna Hildebrandt. Flashing eyes looked love to eyes which flashed in sympathetic response, and the lovers were ere long made man and wife. All went well with the happy pair until one luckless day in the summer of the year 1893, when, yielding to the request of his spouse, Schmidt sent to Germany the means to transport the mother, the niece, and the son by her first husband of Mrs. Schmidt to the American home. Alas for this fatal indulgence of a loved one's longing for the sight of the pledge of a former passion.

Young Hildebrandt was met at New York by his stepfather, who generously clothed him and took him to the home in which Schmidt and his wife had passed many happy and contented days. For a time the stream of life flowed smoothly through the Schmidt ménage. But a day came when the head of the household was compelled to battle with the terrible conviction that the son of her dead husband had supplanted him in his wife's affection. The man and boy worked side by side in the fields. No open rupture was ever observed between them. But the canker-worm of jealousy was silently eating its way into the heart of the taciturn stepfather.

The scenes between husband and wife became bitterly recriminative. Matters had reached such a pitch in a few months that the youngster's mother compelled her husband to sleep on the floor of his own house, while his stepson was comfortably installed in bed. Yet the neglected man held his tongue and his hand.

On September 13, 1893, Schmidt and young Hildebrandt set out along the railway near their unhappy home, ostensibly to set musk-rat traps. The former did considerable business as a trapper, and in the course of a season disposed of a large number of pelts. From that walk Hildebrandt never returned alive. Schmidt assured his mother that the young fellow was on his way home. But the night wore away, and the lad came not to dispel his mother's fears. She determined to set out in search of him. Her husband then changed his explanation of the boy's absence. He told her that he had got into a row and had been arrested. The woman demanded details. Schmidt stammered and flustered, and could tell her nothing to relieve the agony of her suspense. On September 14, 1893 the dead body of young Hildebrandt was found near the railroad track, with the head battered in. The neighbours at once declared that the boy had been deliberately lured to his fate by the jealous husband of Dora Sophia Johanna Hildebrandt, as she had formerly been. This inference was inevitable.

Schmidt strengthened their suspicions by precipitate

flight. For a while he was in hiding at the house of a cousin in New Jersey. Run to earth there by the detectives, he escaped from their grip by the skin of his teeth by clearing a fence in the rear of the house and taking to his heels. From that moment all trace of him was lost, until, in the dark of a winter's night, five years after the murder of Hildebrandt, Schmidt wandered through the snow-laden air back to the scene of his crime. Peering in at the window of his former employer, he was listening in a strange, dreamy sort of way to the music and the laughter of happy children, when the wretched murderer, chilled to the very marrow, crossed a beam of light which streamed from the house.

In a second he was recognised by an old companion.

"My God!" screamed the man, "there's John Schmidt, the fellow that murdered Hildebrandt!" And this after five years! The game was up. The accused man made a dash for freedom. But he did not escape this time.

Arraigned for the brutal murder of his stepson, the prisoner's defence was that the blow, which was struck with a hammer, was necessary to save himself from a fate similar to that which, unfortunately, overtook his victim. Schmidt, who was a Russian Pole by birth, and fifty-five years of age, declared that one of the musk-rat traps had snapped to on one of Hildebrandt's fingers, and that, when he released him, the young fellow was so angry, believing his stepfather to be in fault, that he hit him a blow with the trap. This act he followed with the threat, "I'll give you more than that!" and he appeared to be searching his pockets for a corn-knife which Schmidt declared he knew him to possess. Thereupon Schmidt dealt him what proved to be, though it was not intended to be, the young man's death-blow. This defence was discredited.

Schmidt vowed that he had gone to his employer's house on that drear mid-winter night in order to furnish him with this explanation, and had been put to flight by the suddenness of his recognition. He told this story to deaf ears. The jury never wavered. He admitted that he could not rest until he had returned to the scene of the death of the boy whom, he insisted to the end, he had slain unwittingly and in self-defence. He confessed that he was haunted day and night with the longing to revisit the death-place of Hildebrandt. At last the temptation became absolutely irresistible, and thus the Eugene Aram of America, a victim to the



Escaped by the skin of his teeth.

fatal fascination of the scene of his crime, was lured to his ignominious fate in the dread electrocution chair, in which, after repeated appeals against the sentence of death, he paid the penalty of his bloody deed.

Criminal Questions:

THE CRIMINAL APPEAL.



THE remarkable disclosures as to the methods of the police when they are desirous of securing a conviction which have been made as an outcome of the Beck case, and the uncomfortable feeling that justice has miscarried more than once in recent years, make us more anxious than ever to see the establishment in Great Britain of a Court of Criminal Appeal. If you go to law over a civil case and a verdict involving more than twenty pounds is given against you, you have the right to appeal to a higher court and have the case retried and the verdict set aside if it is not strictly in accordance with the evidence, but if you are falsely accused by the police of crime your case may be hurried through at the Old Bailey before a jury of sleepy citizens who are only anxious to get back to their businesses, and even though the verdict may be clearly an unjust one you have no appeal if the judge chooses to send you to penal servitude for a long term. In other words, while admitting that our jury system is most fallible, our legal Solons say that if the mistake only involves the loss of a Briton's liberty for seven or ten years it does not matter, but if it causes the loss of twenty pounds then it is a grievous mishap and a remedy must be provided against such a frightful miscarriage of justice.

Other countries recognise that it is impossible to trust absolutely to juries, and accordingly every sentence is carefully revised and appeal is allowed in all cases, a special court being set apart for the consideration of criminal appeals. Even in our colonies we have appellate courts to which the prisoner who thinks that he has been wrongly convicted may have recourse. Only in Great Britain do we persist in refusing to the people that which is their right.

Now, it is singular that the power which turns a deaf ear to the demand for a court of revision is the Treasury, and the cases in which justice has manifestly miscarried have been those in which the Treasury has figured as prosecutor. Does it not look as if the Treasury had some particular reason for incarcerating innocent folk against whom it may have some grudge? If not, why this reluctance to have a case retried?

There are other cases, too, where recourse to a Court of Criminal Appeal would be desirable. The verdict may be entirely in accordance with the evidence presented in the court, but after conviction fresh facts may come to light which may make it clear that the convicted man is suffering innocently. At present if the Home Office remembers it, or if it suits that power, a free pardon is granted to the convict for the offence which he never committed. Throughout life he bears the stigma of having been found guilty of a crime. Were there an Appeal Court the case could be tried afresh, and the man's innocence proved to the world. He would not be left on the same footing as the murderer to whom the Crown may extend mercy.

Modern progress demands that no verdict shall be irrevocable; we admit this principle in dealing with our Colonies and India; it is now time that we admitted that British juries may err in criminal cases as well as in civil and appointed a Court of Criminal Appeal.

Omitted.

"ON writing up this execution," remarked the editor, "you have forgotten one important thing."

Joseph looked scared.

"And that is—?" he began feebly.

"You have failed to say that the doomed man slept soundly the night previous to his execution."

MOUSTACHE.

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DAINTY

NOVELS

ONE PENNY WEEKLY.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Causes-Célebres.

WE have been asked to comprise a brief list of the criminal cases we consider the most remarkable during the last 100 years. We confine the list to celebrated murders, and such a collection, to be complete, could not fail to include the following, all of which have been, or will be, described in these columns: 1811, John Williams; 1828, William Corder; 1837, James Greenacre; 1849, Mannings; 1855, William Palmer; 1864, Muller; 1870, John Jones; 1881, Lefroy; 1889, Mrs. Maybrick; 1888, Jack the Ripper; 1892, F. Deeming. Of course, the notorious cases of Thurtell, Bishop and Williams, Burke and Hare, Courvoisier, Fred Baker, Youngman, Hocker, Daniel Good, Walter Miller, Kate Webster, Gleeson Wilson, Mrs. Pearcey, Miss Camp, Mrs. Samuels and her daughter, Hannah Dobbs, and others, are of almost equal importance.

At an Execution.

A REMARKABLE incident concerning the execution of Hotloney and Haggerty for the murder of Mr. Steel at Blackheath in the "teens" of last century was related by the late Dr. Parrish, who died in London at a great age in 1859. It will be remembered that a huge crowd assembled to witness the double hanging, and that a large number of persons were crushed to death and hundreds seriously injured. The latter were removed to the various hospitals—Bart's got most of the cases—and were there treated according to their immediate requirements. One little lad of twelve was so unfortunate as to have his right leg, which was badly mangled, amputated at the knee. After the operation was over the kindly surgeon patted the boy's head, and said encouragingly, "You'll get on famously now; but you won't want to see any more men hanged, will you?"

"Won't I just!" replied the promising youth with intense enthusiasm. "You ought to have seen Haggerty wiggle!"

A Very Old Crime.

IN 1791 a man named John Chaucer Edmunds was tried for murder. The body of a gentleman had been found in a certain wood near Ross, in Herefordshire, with his head battered in. A letter written by the prisoner was found at the victim's abode, asking the latter to meet him in the retired and secluded wood referred to. It was proved that the wife of the accused had "gone astray" with the deceased, and that the former was much incensed against him. Apart from this strong motive for the crime, valuable property belonging to the murdered man was found upon the suspect, whose version of the affair could hardly be credited. He admitted having arranged to meet Mr. X., and declared that he found him lying dead, weltering in his blood. Being hard-pressed for money, he did not give the alarm, and robbed the dead man of his cash and pocket-book, which the real murderer had left behind. The prisoner would assuredly have been hanged if Providence had not intervened on his behalf. A few days before the trial came on the body of a man was fished out of the River Medway. It proved to be that of a near relative of the murdered man, who left a written confession stating that he had committed the deed from motives of revenge. The victim had seduced his favourite sister and deserted her, and the brother, meeting his adversary by accident in the lonely road, had quarrelled with him, and, in the height of his fury, had struck him on the head with a loaded stick which he carried to preserve himself from the attacks of poachers.

After committing this deed of revenge this man wrote a confession, forwarded it to a friend in town, proceeded into Kent, and drowned himself in the manner stated.



SLAS.—The case you refer to is that of the swindler calling herself "Lady Maud Bective," who was known by half-a-dozen different aliases, and was sentenced, for frauds at Teddington, to six months' hard labour, in April, 1876. This query gave us a lot of trouble, but these are the facts.

CASS (Blackfriars).—Yes, a soldier did accuse himself of murdering a young woman at Lordship Lane, Dulwich that year, but he proved to be insane. We have seen the spot of this murder—near the railway—but the perpetrator was never discovered.

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